

# ACRP

## REPORT 28

**AIRPORT  
COOPERATIVE  
RESEARCH  
PROGRAM**

### **Marketing Guidebook for Small Airports**

Sponsored by  
the Federal  
Aviation  
Administration



HE9797.4.E3  
M37  
2010eb

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD  
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

## ACRP OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE\*

### CHAIR

**James Wilding**  
*Independent Consultant*

### VICE CHAIR

**Jeff Hamiel**  
*Minneapolis-St. Paul  
Metropolitan Airports Commission*

### MEMBERS

**James Crites**  
*Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport*  
**Richard de Neufville**  
*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*  
**Kevin C. Dolliole**  
*Unison Consulting*  
**John K. Duval**  
*Beverly Municipal Airport*  
**Kitty Freidheim**  
*Freidheim Consulting*  
**Steve Grossman**  
*Jacksonville Aviation Authority*  
**Tom Jensen**  
*National Safe Skies Alliance*  
**Catherine M. Lang**  
*Federal Aviation Administration*  
**Gina Marie Lindsey**  
*Los Angeles World Airports*  
**Carolyn Motz**  
*Hagerstown Regional Airport*  
**Richard Tucker**  
*Huntsville International Airport*

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

**Sabrina Johnson**  
*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*  
**Richard Marchi**  
*Airports Council International—North America*  
**Laura McKee**  
*Air Transport Association of America*  
**Henry Ogrodzinski**  
*National Association of State Aviation Officials*  
**Melissa Sabatine**  
*American Association of Airport Executives*  
**Robert E. Skinner, Jr.**  
*Transportation Research Board*

### SECRETARY

**Christopher W. Jenks**  
*Transportation Research Board*

## TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD 2009 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE\*

### OFFICERS

**CHAIR:** **Adib K. Kanafani**, *Cahill Professor of Civil Engineering, University of California, Berkeley*  
**VICE CHAIR:** **Michael R. Morris**, *Director of Transportation, North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington*  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** **Robert E. Skinner, Jr.**, *Transportation Research Board*

### MEMBERS

**J. Barry Barker**, *Executive Director, Transit Authority of River City, Louisville, KY*  
**Allen D. Biehler**, *Secretary, Pennsylvania DOT, Harrisburg*  
**Larry L. Brown, Sr.**, *Executive Director, Mississippi DOT, Jackson*  
**Deborah H. Butler**, *Executive Vice President, Planning, and CIO, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Norfolk, VA*  
**William A.V. Clark**, *Professor, Department of Geography, University of California, Los Angeles*  
**David S. Ekern**, *Commissioner, Virginia DOT, Richmond*  
**Nicholas J. Garber**, *Henry L. Kinnier Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Virginia, Charlottesville*  
**Jeffrey W. Hamiel**, *Executive Director, Metropolitan Airports Commission, Minneapolis, MN*  
**Edward A. (Ned) Helme**, *President, Center for Clean Air Policy, Washington, DC*  
**Randell H. Iwasaki**, *Director, California DOT, Sacramento*  
**Susan Martinovich**, *Director, Nevada DOT, Carson City*  
**Debra L. Miller**, *Secretary, Kansas DOT, Topeka*  
**Neil J. Pedersen**, *Administrator, Maryland State Highway Administration, Baltimore*  
**Pete K. Rahn**, *Director, Missouri DOT, Jefferson City*  
**Sandra Rosenbloom**, *Professor of Planning, University of Arizona, Tucson*  
**Tracy L. Rosser**, *Vice President, Regional General Manager, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Mandeville, LA*  
**Rosa Clausell Rountree**, *CEO—General Manager, Transroute International Canada Services, Inc., Pitt Meadows, BC*  
**Steven T. Scalzo**, *Chief Operating Officer, Marine Resources Group, Seattle, WA*  
**Henry G. (Gerry) Schwartz, Jr.**, *Chairman (retired), Jacobs/Sverdrup Civil, Inc., St. Louis, MO*  
**C. Michael Walton**, *Ernest H. Cockrell Centennial Chair in Engineering, University of Texas, Austin*  
**Linda S. Watson**, *CEO, LYNX—Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority, Orlando*  
**Steve Williams**, *Chairman and CEO, Maverick Transportation, Inc., Little Rock, AR*

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

**Thad Allen** (Adm., U.S. Coast Guard), *Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, DC*  
**Peter H. Appel**, *Administrator, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**J. Randolph Babbitt**, *Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**Rebecca M. Brewster**, *President and COO, American Transportation Research Institute, Smyrna, GA*  
**George Bugliarello**, *President Emeritus and University Professor, Polytechnic Institute of New York University, Brooklyn; Foreign Secretary, National Academy of Engineering, Washington, DC*  
**James E. Caponiti**, *Acting Deputy Administrator, Maritime Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**Cynthia Douglass**, *Acting Deputy Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**LeRoy Gishi**, *Chief, Division of Transportation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC*  
**Edward R. Hamberger**, *President and CEO, Association of American Railroads, Washington, DC*  
**John C. Horsley**, *Executive Director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington, DC*  
**Rose A. McMurry**, *Acting Deputy Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**Ronald Medford**, *Acting Deputy Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**Victor M. Mendez**, *Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**William W. Millar**, *President, American Public Transportation Association, Washington, DC*  
**Peter M. Rogoff**, *Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**Joseph C. Szabo**, *Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S.DOT*  
**Polly Trottenberg**, *Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S.DOT*  
**Robert L. Van Antwerp** (Lt. Gen., U.S. Army), *Chief of Engineers and Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, DC*

\*Membership as of October 2009.

\*Membership as of October 2009.



---

**ACRP REPORT 28**

---

**Marketing Guidebook  
for Small Airports**

**Lois Kramer  
Peggy Fowler**  
KRAMER aerotek, inc.  
Boulder, CO

**Robert Hazel  
Melissa Ureksoy**  
OLIVER WYMAN, INC.  
Reston, VA

**Gary Harig**  
GMH CONSULTING, LLC  
Burke, VA

*Subscriber Categories*  
Aviation

---

Research sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration

---

**TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD**

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
2010  
[www.TRB.org](http://www.TRB.org)

## AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Airports are vital national resources. They serve a key role in transportation of people and goods and in regional, national, and international commerce. They are where the nation's aviation system connects with other modes of transportation and where federal responsibility for managing and regulating air traffic operations intersects with the role of state and local governments that own and operate most airports. Research is necessary to solve common operating problems, to adapt appropriate new technologies from other industries, and to introduce innovations into the airport industry. The Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) serves as one of the principal means by which the airport industry can develop innovative near-term solutions to meet demands placed on it.

The need for ACRP was identified in *TRB Special Report 272: Airport Research Needs: Cooperative Solutions* in 2003, based on a study sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The ACRP carries out applied research on problems that are shared by airport operating agencies and are not being adequately addressed by existing federal research programs. It is modeled after the successful National Cooperative Highway Research Program and Transit Cooperative Research Program. The ACRP undertakes research and other technical activities in a variety of airport subject areas, including design, construction, maintenance, operations, safety, security, policy, planning, human resources, and administration. The ACRP provides a forum where airport operators can cooperatively address common operational problems.

The ACRP was authorized in December 2003 as part of the Vision 100-Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act. The primary participants in the ACRP are (1) an independent governing board, the ACRP Oversight Committee (AOC), appointed by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation with representation from airport operating agencies, other stakeholders, and relevant industry organizations such as the Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA), the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), and the Air Transport Association (ATA) as vital links to the airport community; (2) the TRB as program manager and secretariat for the governing board; and (3) the FAA as program sponsor. In October 2005, the FAA executed a contract with the National Academies formally initiating the program.

The ACRP benefits from the cooperation and participation of airport professionals, air carriers, shippers, state and local government officials, equipment and service suppliers, other airport users, and research organizations. Each of these participants has different interests and responsibilities, and each is an integral part of this cooperative research effort.

Research problem statements for the ACRP are solicited periodically but may be submitted to the TRB by anyone at any time. It is the responsibility of the AOC to formulate the research program by identifying the highest priority projects and defining funding levels and expected products.

Once selected, each ACRP project is assigned to an expert panel, appointed by the TRB. Panels include experienced practitioners and research specialists; heavy emphasis is placed on including airport professionals, the intended users of the research products. The panels prepare project statements (requests for proposals), select contractors, and provide technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project. The process for developing research problem statements and selecting research agencies has been used by TRB in managing cooperative research programs since 1962. As in other TRB activities, ACRP project panels serve voluntarily without compensation.

Primary emphasis is placed on disseminating ACRP results to the intended end-users of the research: airport operating agencies, service providers, and suppliers. The ACRP produces a series of research reports for use by airport operators, local agencies, the FAA, and other interested parties, and industry associations may arrange for workshops, training aids, field visits, and other activities to ensure that results are implemented by airport-industry practitioners.

## ACRP REPORT 28

Project 1-04

ISSN 1935-9802

ISBN 978-0-309-11818-7

Library of Congress Control Number 2009944087

© 2010 National Academy of Sciences. All rights reserved.

### COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Authors herein are responsible for the authenticity of their materials and for obtaining written permissions from publishers or persons who own the copyright to any previously published or copyrighted material used herein.

Cooperative Research Programs (CRP) grants permission to reproduce material in this publication for classroom and not-for-profit purposes. Permission is given with the understanding that none of the material will be used to imply TRB or FAA endorsement of a particular product, method, or practice. It is expected that those reproducing the material in this document for educational and not-for-profit uses will give appropriate acknowledgment of the source of any reprinted or reproduced material. For other uses of the material, request permission from CRP.

### NOTICE

The project that is the subject of this report was a part of the Airport Cooperative Research Program conducted by the Transportation Research Board with the approval of the Governing Board of the National Research Council. Such approval reflects the Governing Board's judgment that the project concerned is appropriate with respect to both the purposes and resources of the National Research Council.

The members of the technical advisory panel selected to monitor this project and to review this report were chosen for recognized scholarly competence and with due consideration for the balance of disciplines appropriate to the project. The opinions and conclusions expressed or implied are those of the research agency that performed the research, and while they have been accepted as appropriate by the technical panel, they are not necessarily those of the Transportation Research Board, the National Research Council, or the Federal Aviation Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Each report is reviewed and accepted for publication by the technical panel according to procedures established and monitored by the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee and the Governing Board of the National Research Council.

The Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, the National Research Council, and the Federal Aviation Administration (sponsor of the Airport Cooperative Research Program) do not endorse products or manufacturers. Trade or manufacturers' names appear herein solely because they are considered essential to the clarity and completeness of the project reporting.

*Published reports of the*

### AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

*are available from:*

Transportation Research Board  
Business Office  
500 Fifth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

*and can be ordered through the Internet at*

<http://www.national-academies.org/trb/bookstore>

Printed in the United States of America



# THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

The **National Academy of Sciences** is a private, nonprofit, self-perpetuating society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research, dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology and to their use for the general welfare. On the authority of the charter granted to it by the Congress in 1863, the Academy has a mandate that requires it to advise the federal government on scientific and technical matters. Dr. Ralph J. Cicerone is president of the National Academy of Sciences.

The **National Academy of Engineering** was established in 1964, under the charter of the National Academy of Sciences, as a parallel organization of outstanding engineers. It is autonomous in its administration and in the selection of its members, sharing with the National Academy of Sciences the responsibility for advising the federal government. The National Academy of Engineering also sponsors engineering programs aimed at meeting national needs, encourages education and research, and recognizes the superior achievements of engineers. Dr. Charles M. Vest is president of the National Academy of Engineering.

The **Institute of Medicine** was established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences to secure the services of eminent members of appropriate professions in the examination of policy matters pertaining to the health of the public. The Institute acts under the responsibility given to the National Academy of Sciences by its congressional charter to be an adviser to the federal government and, on its own initiative, to identify issues of medical care, research, and education. Dr. Harvey V. Fineberg is president of the Institute of Medicine.

The **National Research Council** was organized by the National Academy of Sciences in 1916 to associate the broad community of science and technology with the Academy's purposes of furthering knowledge and advising the federal government. Functioning in accordance with general policies determined by the Academy, the Council has become the principal operating agency of both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering in providing services to the government, the public, and the scientific and engineering communities. The Council is administered jointly by both the Academies and the Institute of Medicine. Dr. Ralph J. Cicerone and Dr. Charles M. Vest are chair and vice chair, respectively, of the National Research Council.

The **Transportation Research Board** is one of six major divisions of the National Research Council. The mission of the Transportation Research Board is to provide leadership in transportation innovation and progress through research and information exchange, conducted within a setting that is objective, interdisciplinary, and multimodal. The Board's varied activities annually engage about 7,000 engineers, scientists, and other transportation researchers and practitioners from the public and private sectors and academia, all of whom contribute their expertise in the public interest. The program is supported by state transportation departments, federal agencies including the component administrations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and other organizations and individuals interested in the development of transportation. [www.TRB.org](http://www.TRB.org)

[www.national-academies.org](http://www.national-academies.org)

# COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMS

## CRP STAFF FOR ACRP REPORT 28

Christopher W. Jenks, *Director, Cooperative Research Programs*  
Crawford F. Jencks, *Deputy Director, Cooperative Research Programs*  
Michael R. Salamone, *ACRP Manager*  
Marci A. Greenberger, *Senior Program Officer*  
Eileen P. Delaney, *Director of Publications*  
Kami Cabral, *Editor*

## ACRP PROJECT 1-04 PANEL

### Field of Administration

Marc P. Pelham, *Mobile Airport Authority, Mobile, AL (Chair)*  
Randall Heath Allen, *Lake Charles Regional Airport, Lake Charles, LA*  
Chuck Howell, *Great Lakes Airlines, Cheyenne, WY*  
Richard C. Howell, *San Luis Obispo County (CA) Regional Airport*  
Thomas P. Nolan, *Palm Springs (CA) International Airport*  
Susan Palmeri, *Stockton Municipal Airport, Stockton, CA*  
Lisa Anderson Spencer, *TransSolutions, Arlington, VA*  
Jack E. Thompson, Jr., *C&S Companies, Orlando, FL*  
Sharon Glasgow, *FAA Liaison*  
Christine Gerencher, *TRB Liaison*

## AUTHOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research described herein was performed under ACRP Project 01-04 by KRAMER aerotek, inc., and Oliver Wyman, Inc. Ms. Lois Kramer served as the Principal Investigator on the project.

Ms. Kramer was assisted by Peggy Fowler. The team also included Robert Hazel and Melissa Ureksoy of Oliver Wyman, Inc., and Gary Harig of GMH Consulting, LLC. Each member of the team contributed extensively to the concept and content of *ACRP Report 28: Marketing Guidebook for Small Airports*.



# FOREWORD

By Marci A. Greenberger

Staff Officer

Transportation Research Board

*ACRP Report 28: Marketing Guidebook for Small Airports* will help airport managers with small or minimal budgets to develop a marketing program for their general aviation or commercial service airport. The Guidebook discusses the basics of marketing, takes the reader through the process of developing and implementing a plan, presents approaches to marketing and public relations, provides worksheets and concludes with a selection of instructive case studies. The Guidebook provides ideas about how to regularly communicate with tenants and the community, how to effectively position the airport in the region, and how to develop and retain airport activity. Airport managers and those responsible for marketing and working with communities will find many useful worksheets and tools to assess their individual situation, set goals, and select from low cost strategies to deliver their message.

This well-researched guidebook, with its easy to use techniques and worksheets along with real-world examples, will help those in the airport community to create and sustain a positive and persuasive airport identity and message.

---

As airports are increasingly under pressure to explain their contributions to the community and at the same time keep expenses down, it is important that an airport has, as a resource at their fingertips, effective strategies to generate goodwill, strengthen relationships, increase use of the airport, and showcase the facility. For many airports, there are few marketing resources and none available for a trial and error approach.

Under ACRP Project 01-04, the research team was tasked with developing a guidebook for small airports in the areas of marketing, external communications, and public information. As part of the effort, the research team was asked to describe effective airport marketing practices and to help airport managers develop a new marketing plan or fine-tune an existing one.

The project was accomplished by a review of relevant literature, existing research, published guidance, other appropriate material and by examination of lessons learned from marketing practices of other industries. The research team also surveyed and interviewed a group of small- to medium-size general aviation and commercial airports that have ongoing marketing programs or have experienced sustained growth. The findings were examined, compiled, and the guidebook developed.

## **SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

Mr. Royce Rankin, Airport Manager, Boire Field—Nashua Municipal Airport  
Mr. Curt Hawkins, Airport Manager, Caldwell Industrial Airport  
Mr. Robert Olislagers, Executive Director, Centennial Airport  
Mr. Greg Chenoweth, Airport Manager, Chandler Municipal Airport  
Ms. Tiffany Gillem, Airport Manager, Craig Municipal Airport  
Mr. Fred Guertin, Airport Manager, Fitchburg Municipal Airport  
Mr. Steve Brian, Executive Director, Glynn County Airport Commission  
Ms. Colette Edmisten, Operations Coordinator, Glynn County Airport Commission  
Mr. Michael Reisman, Airport Manager, Greeley-Weld County Airport  
Mr. Greg Larsen, Business Development Manager, Hagerstown Regional Airport  
Mr. Earl Hicks, Airport Director, Houma-Terrebonne Airport  
Mr. Terrence Lloyd, Director of Aviation, Kissimmee Gateway Airport  
Mr. Richard Stehmeier, Airport Manager, Logan-Cache Airport  
Mr. Vinicio Llerena, Director of Aviation, Orange County Airport  
Mr. Timothy Rogers, Executive Director, Salina Airport Authority  
Ms. Laura Robertson, Marketing and Public Relations Specialist, Salina Airport Authority  
Mr. Gary Petersen, Airport Manager, Salinas Municipal Airport  
Mr. Bob Shaffer, Airport Manager, DuBois Regional Airport  
Mr. Thomas C. Frungillo, Airport Director, Bradford Regional Airport  
Mr. Dave Young, Vice President—Air Service, Marketing and Development,  
Ft. Wayne International Airport  
Ms. Barbie Peek, Marketing Director, Huntsville International Airport  
Mr. Gabe Monzo, Airport Manager, Latrobe-Westmoreland County Airport  
Mr. Mike Sharkey, Airport Manager, Lee Bird Field Airport  
Mr. Glenn Januska, Airport Manager, Natrona County International Airport  
Mr. James Smith, Executive Director, Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport  
Mr. Joseph J. Brauer, Airport Director, Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport  
Mr. Greg Campbell, Executive Director, Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport  
Mr. Larry Salyers, Director, Tri-State Airport  
Mr. Terry Anderson, Executive Director, Tupelo Regional Airport

## **CASE STUDY CONTRIBUTORS**

Mr. Earl Hicks, Airport Director, Houma-Terrebonne Airport  
Ms. Michelle Cardwell Edwards, Recruitment Director, Terrebone Economic  
Development Authority  
Mr. Michael Reisman, Airport Manager, Greeley-Weld County Airport  
Mr. Jeffrey Price, Faculty Member, Department of Aviation and Aerospace Science,  
Metropolitan State College of Denver  
Ms. Amber E. Schlabs, Aviation Business and Marketing Manager, Aeronautics Division,  
Wyoming Department of Transportation  
Mr. Gabe Monzo, Airport Director, Latrobe-Westmoreland County Airport  
Mr. Andy Stofan, President, Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Jim Wasylik, President, Westmedia Group, Latrobe, PA  
Mr. John Letterio, Vice President, Westmedia Group, Latrobe, PA  
Mr. David Lim, Chief Marketing Officer, Amtrak  
Ms. Sheryl Richards, Sr. Director Pricing and Revenue Management, Amtrak



# CONTENTS

## PART 1 INTRODUCTION TO AIRPORT MARKETING

### **2 Chapter 1 Introduction**

- 2 1.1 Overview
- 3 1.2 How Airports Use Marketing and Public Relations
- 4 1.3 Navigating the Guidebook

### **5 Chapter 2 Marketing Plan Basics**

- 5 2.1 How Greeley-Weld County Airport Crafted Its Marketing Plan
- 6 2.2 What Goes into a Marketing Plan?
- 7 2.3 Seven Steps to Prepare and Execute a Marketing Plan

## PART 2 PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF A MARKETING PLAN

### **11 Chapter 3 Scope of Your Marketing Plan**

- 11 3.1 Step 1—Defining Marketing Goals and Objectives
- 11 3.2 Assemble the Planning Team
- 12 3.3 Brainstorm the Marketing Issues
- 13 3.4 Marketing Goals and Objectives—First Draft
- 19 3.5 Research Findings: Marketing Goals Reported by Airport Managers

### **22 Chapter 4 Environment and Resources**

- 22 4.1 Step 2—SWOT Analysis and Resource Assessment
- 22 4.2 SWOT Analysis
- 29 4.3 Resource Assessment
- 32 4.4 Conclusions

### **33 Chapter 5 Audience, Message, Actions**

- 33 5.1 Step 3—Revise Goals and Objectives
- 34 5.2 Step 4—Identify Target Audience, Message, and Actions
- 34 5.3 Target Audience
- 35 5.4 Message
- 36 5.5 Actions—Marketing Tactics

### **40 Chapter 6 Marketing Tools**

- 40 6.1 Step 5—Selecting Marketing Tools
- 40 6.2 Cost of Different Tools
- 41 6.3 Tools Airports Use Today
- 44 6.4 Tools Airports Consider Most Effective
- 45 6.5 Cost and Effectiveness Matrix
- 47 6.6 Essential Marketing Tools for All Airports

<b>48</b>	<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Characteristics of an Effective Marketing Plan</b>
48	7.1	Core Components of a Marketing Plan
49	7.2	Action Plan
53	7.3	Characteristics of an Effective Marketing Plan
53	7.4	Putting the Principles to Work—Community Support Case Study
56	7.5	Importance of a Powerful Executive Summary
<b>57</b>	<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Execute, Monitor, and Evaluate the Plan</b>
57	8.1	Step 6—Execute the Plan
58	8.2	Step 7—Monitor and Evaluate the Plan
61	8.3	Modify Your Marketing Plan
61	8.4	Funding Sources

### **PART 3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

<b>66</b>	<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>Marketing Tools</b>
66	9.1	Index of Marketing Tools
66	9.2	Categories of Marketing Tools
<b>69</b>	<b>Chapter 10</b>	<b>Public Relations Tools</b>
69	10.1	What Is Public Relations?
70	10.2	Earned Media
78	10.3	Public Speaking
80	10.4	Events
83	10.5	Promotions
87	10.6	Sponsorships and Volunteering
89	10.7	Other Public Relations Materials
<b>93</b>	<b>Chapter 11</b>	<b>Advertising Tools</b>
93	11.1	Types of Advertising Tools
94	11.2	Print Media
101	11.3	Signage
107	11.4	Multi-Media: Radio, Television, and Video
110	11.5	Internet and Website Tools
<b>119</b>	<b>Chapter 12</b>	<b>Networking Opportunities</b>
119	12.1	Business, Civic, and Non-Profit Networking Opportunities
122	12.2	Networking with Professional and Industry Organizations
123	12.3	Tradeshows and Conferences
127	12.4	Strategic Partnerships
130	12.5	Lobbying
130	12.6	Contact Managers and Networking Tools



## PART 4 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **136 Chapter 13** Marketing Plan Worksheets

- 136 13.1 SWOT Primer
- 137 13.2 SWOT Examples
- 138 13.3 SWOT Analysis Worksheet
- 139 13.4 Marketing Inventory Worksheet—Human Resources
- 140 13.5 Marketing Inventory Worksheet—Financial Resources
- 141 13.6 Marketing Action Plan
- 142 13.7 Marketing Record

### **143 Chapter 14** Case Studies

- 143 14.1 Greeley-Weld County Airport
- 145 14.2 Houma-Terrebonne Airport
- 148 14.3 Arnold Palmer Airport

### **154 Chapter 15** Frequently Asked Questions

### **155 Chapter 16** Glossary

### **157 Chapter 17** Bibliography

### **163 Chapter 18** Airport Survey Methodology and Findings

- 163 18.1 Introduction
- 163 18.2 General Aviation Airports
- 170 18.3 Commercial Service Airports





**PART I**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**TO**  
**AIRPORT MARKETING**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Overview
- 1.2 How Airports Use Marketing and Public Relations
- 1.3 Navigating the Guidebook

### 1.1 OVERVIEW

There is probably no single best way to define marketing. Two definitions that capture the essential elements are listed below:

*Marketing is the process of planning and executing programs designed to influence the behavior of target audiences—Alan R. Andreasen and Philip Kotler*

*Marketing is the art of identifying and understanding customer needs and creating solutions that deliver satisfaction to the customers, profits to the producers and benefits for the stakeholders—Sean Mauger*

Whatever definition you choose, airports today must market effectively to attract activity and achieve financial self-sufficiency. If you are managing a general aviation airport, you must let your customers and potential customers know how the airport excels and why they should visit or base their aircraft at the airport. If you are managing a small commercial service airport, you must obtain community support in order to attract and retain the best possible air service.

There are many books on marketing, but few that speak directly to airport managers. The purpose of the *ACRP Report 28* is to provide managers of general aviation and small commercial service airports with a practical, easy-to-use guidebook for dealing with a wide range of marketing issues.

The Guidebook offers a user friendly approach to marketing.

- Analyze the situation, set priorities, and make a plan.
- Identify the target audience and the message.
- Select cost-effective marketing tools.
- Monitor your program and make adjustments as necessary.

This approach will allow you to use the available resources effectively to your advantage.

The Guidebook includes reports on interviews held with airport sponsors, managers, staff, and state aviation officials at over 20 airports to discuss key marketing issues and best practices. Their experiences are described as case studies and examples throughout the Guidebook. For those users who want to apply the methods described, Chapter 13 provides worksheets and instructions to build your own marketing plan.

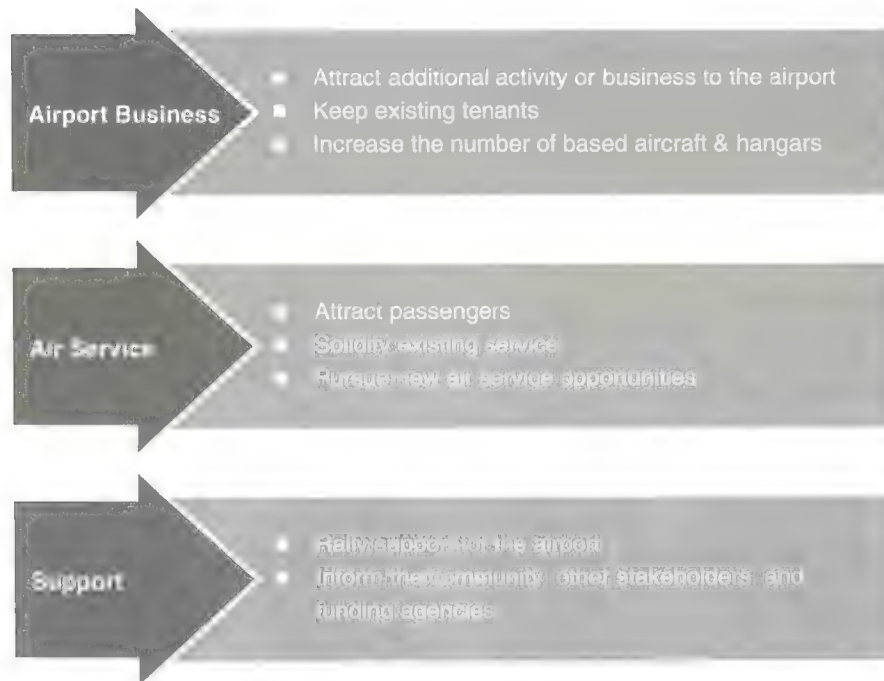
Small airports must cope with increasingly complex marketing issues. Hopefully, the Guidebook will contribute to your on-going efforts to successfully position your airport in the community, with your tenants, and among your competitors.

## 1.2 HOW AIRPORTS USE MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Airport managers use public relations and marketing to communicate with their customers, a diverse group that can include airport sponsors, tenants, airlines, business prospects, and the community.

Typically an airport markets for the reasons shown in Exhibit 1.1.

**Exhibit 1.1—Reasons to Market the Airport.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

All airports, regardless of size, engage in marketing on a regular basis. Here are a few examples that demonstrate the range of marketing and public relations activities undertaken by airports:

- The airport has applied for a federal grant and has decided to brief its congressional delegation about the proposed project.
- The newspaper or radio station has called the airport office for an interview.
- An airline has announced intentions to build a new maintenance facility at an airport in the region and the airport seeks to advance its candidacy for site selection.
- A few neighbors near the airport have complained about noise or truck traffic.
- The airport seeks to attract more passengers for existing air service.
- The airport wants local businesses to support a proposed new service.
- A large building on the airport is available for lease.

Because many small airports are run by a single individual or a small group, the main goal of this Guidebook is to help managers prepare a low cost marketing and public relations plan that targets the intended audiences, establishes a consistent and strong message, and spells out specific activities to communicate the message.



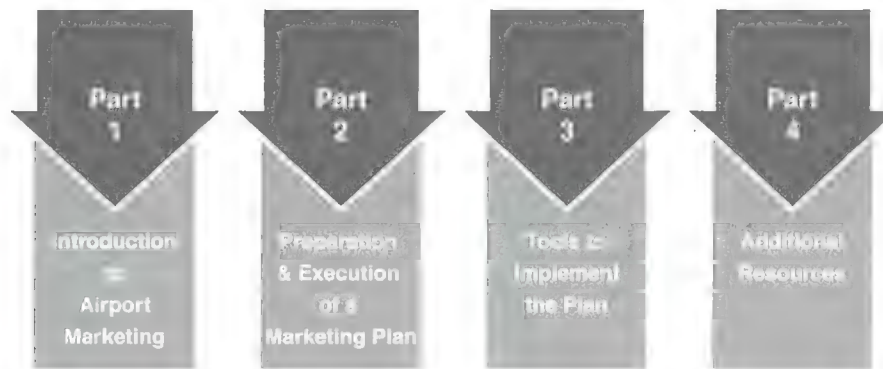
### 1.3 NAVIGATING THE GUIDEBOOK

The Guidebook is divided into four main sections that address how to put together, manage, and monitor a marketing plan (see Exhibit 1.2).

- **PART 1** includes this introduction and the basics of what goes into a marketing plan.
- **PART 2** presents seven steps to prepare and implement a marketing plan.
- **PART 3** describes public relations, advertising, and networking tools that airports can use. Tools are evaluated for cost, effectiveness, and complexity to implement.
- **PART 4** is a collection of additional resources for airport managers:
  - worksheets to prepare a marketing plan
  - case studies of airport marketing programs
  - a bibliography, glossary, and frequently asked questions

This how-to approach invites readers to (a) start at the beginning and read through the entire Guidebook or (b) use the Guidebook as a reference and scan areas of interest. The intention here is to introduce the basic framework and to provide success stories from other airports, tools, and worksheets that will help you construct an effective marketing program.

**Exhibit 1.2—Guidebook Organization.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., March 2009

# CHAPTER 2

## MARKETING PLAN BASICS

- 2.1 How Greeley-Weld County Airport Crafted Its Marketing Plan
- 2.2 What Goes into a Marketing Plan?
- 2.3 Seven Steps to Prepare and Execute a Marketing Plan

This chapter presents an overview of how to create a marketing plan. The best plans are usually simple and clear. Simplicity and clarity aid in articulating marketing goals and in delivering your message to the intended audience. Marketing plans are not necessarily expensive. Planning and forethought are the key elements in crafting a plan.

This chapter offers the big picture. Part 2 of the Guidebook provides details on each step and Chapter 13 offers a compendium of worksheets intended to provoke thought as you design your plan.

We begin with a case study of Greeley-Weld County Airport in Colorado (see Exhibit 2.1). This airport put together a marketing plan with the help of students and the regional economic development agency. The plan provided an excellent starting point and today serves as a guiding document for the airport. Here is their story.

### 2.1 HOW GREELEY-WELD COUNTY AIRPORT CRAFTED ITS MARKETING PLAN

Greeley-Weld County Airport is a general aviation airport with 145,000 annual operations and 220 based aircraft. The airport operates with a small staff and a small annual marketing budget. The airport needed a good public relations and marketing program.

Several factors pushed the airport toward the development of a formal marketing plan. First, the airport competes for new business with Ft. Collins-Loveland Airport which is 20 miles west of Greeley. Second, Greeley-Weld County is located in a fast growing corridor north of Denver, which means increasing interaction with the local community. Third, on the public relations side, development at the airport also required increased communication with the public because the airport was engaged in various runway, fencing, and hangar projects that have a direct impact on tenants, visitors, and the community. The Airport Authority was also negotiating a contract to explore and extract oil and gas from beneath the surface of the airport.

In the past, airport marketing was handled principally by the airport manager and the staff as part of their overall job responsibilities. The airport staff determined that the airport needed outside assistance with marketing and public relations. This assistance, at first, appeared well beyond the airport's current budget. To move ahead, the airport manager called on existing relationships in the Denver area for assistance. For the economic development plan, the manager contacted the Director of the Upstate Colorado Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The airport and the EDC had already exchanged development and investment leads. For the public information plan, the airport manager turned to the City of Greeley Public Information Office for assistance. For the marketing plan, the manager engaged students from the Aviation Department of the Metropolitan State College of Denver (Metro State) and made his marketing plan a special student project.

Greeley-Weld County Airport created three strategic documents on a very small budget. The documents today serve as working guides for economic development, public relations activities, and airport marketing. The

economic development plan resulted in five goals and a number of objectives which the airport undertook immediately. The public information plan was put on the airport's website and is the first stop for reporters looking for basic information about and photographs of the airport. It also sets out contact information and procedures for regular and emergency communications with the airport. This has saved airport staff considerable time. The marketing plan was completed, which was a goal of the economic development plan. In addition, the airport joined with the community in a rebranding effort.

The airport's approach to recruit help with their documents had important side benefits including strengthening ties with the regional EDC and the City of Greeley as well as giving students at Metro State a real experience putting together a marketing plan. These plans resulted in a directed approach to marketing and public relations. Details of how these documents were developed are described in Chapter 14.

#### Exhibit 2.1—Runway 16/34, Greeley-Weld County Airport.



Source: Greeley-Weld County Airport

## 2.2 WHAT GOES INTO A MARKETING PLAN?

A marketing plan addresses the following questions:

- What are the **marketing goals**?
- Who are the **target audiences**?
- What is the **message** the airport intends to communicate?
- What **methods of communication** will the airport use to reach its audience?
- What **staffing and financial resources** will support the effort?
- How will the airport **measure success**?

This Guidebook suggests that every airport complete a self-assessment before preparing or refining its marketing plan. The airport self-assessment is described in Chapter 4. For more detail on how to complete a full airport strategic plan, which provides the foundation upon which marketing plans and other airport plans are built, see *ACRP Report 20: Strategic Planning in the Airport Industry* (Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, Washington, DC 2009).

A marketing plan addresses all these questions and typically includes background information to establish the reasoning behind the marketing effort. This is useful because marketing is an on-going effort and typically many people are involved. The marketing plan brings everyone up to speed and serves as a departure point for future efforts. A marketing plan is a blueprint for action and should be reviewed and updated every year. To visualize what might go into an airport's marketing plan, Exhibit 2.2 shows a sample outline of a plan.

### **Exhibit 2.2—Sample Outline of a Marketing Plan.**

---

#### **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

- What are the airport's strengths and weaknesses?
- What are its main services and who are its users and tenants?
- How is recent performance, and what are trends at the airport?
- What are market trends in the region (and nation)?
- Who is the airport's competition in each important functional area?
- What are the problem areas (internal or external) that might dampen the airport's prospects?
- What are the opportunities?

#### **MARKETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Airport's top marketing goals (three to five)
- For each goal
  - Who is the target audience?
  - What is the airport's competitive edge?
  - What are achievable objectives to address this goal?
  - What actions will help to achieve the specific objective?

#### **ACTION PLAN (CURRENT YEAR)**

- Specific objectives for current year
- Marketing activities to achieve objectives
- Sequencing and mix of activities
- Staff, other organizations, and volunteer resources required
- Budget and funding sources
- Management and review

---

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### **2.3 SEVEN STEPS TO PREPARE AND EXECUTE A MARKETING PLAN**

A marketing plan should be viewed in the same light and addressed with the same degree of energy as other important airport plans. Given the many ways to market an airport and the limited resources available, it is essential to have a focus for the marketing plan, that is, to define the goals and objectives, establish the message, and allocate resources. There are seven basic steps in the creation of a marketing plan. The first five steps are the planning phase of the plan and the last two are the implementation phase of the plan. The steps are shown graphically in Exhibit 2.3 and then described.



**Exhibit 2.3—Seven Steps to Creating a Marketing Plan.**

Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

### 2.3.1 PLANNING PHASE

**Step 1. Define marketing goals and objectives.** What issue is the plan designed to address; for example, attract new air service, increase hangar rental revenues, expand existing facilities? In simple terms, what is the issue you wish to address and what is your “hoped for” outcome?

**Step 2. Conduct strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis and assess resources.** This step will probably require the most thought and input in the creation of the plan.

The SWOT analysis requires you to analyze each of these attributes for your airport. In some cases, the distinction between strengths and opportunities will be blurry, as will the identification of weaknesses and threats. Categorization is not important. What is important in the process is to honestly identify the positive aspects (strengths and opportunities) that will aid in accomplishing your goals and objectives as well as the negative factors that must be addressed and overcome.

A survey of the resources available to accomplish the goals and objectives (e.g., finances, staffing, etc.) should also be done in conjunction with the SWOT analysis. In many cases, staffing and finances will be included in the SWOT analysis as either a strength or weakness, but resource availability requires specific attention because it influences the scope of the marketing plan and the tools used to reach the target audience.

**Step 3. Revise goals and objectives.** Based on the material developed from the SWOT analysis and assessment of resources, the original goals and objectives should be revisited to ensure that they are realistic and attainable. If not, the goals and objectives should be revised as necessary.

**Step 4. Identify the target audience, message, and marketing actions required.** Based on the information obtained in the previous steps, the basic message, target audience, and actions required must be identified.

An example of selecting the target audience comes from Arnold Palmer Airport in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. There, the ultimate objective was to secure air service. At first glance, one might assume the logical target audience was the air carriers. However, to persuade air carriers to provide service, community support (especially from the area businesses) was required. Thus, the target audience, at least initially, was the community. Only after first securing community support did the air carriers become the target audience.

In this example, had the airport gone to the air carriers without securing community support, there is a good chance the campaign would have failed. The target audience must be in a position to react to the message and take appropriate action.

**Step 5. Select tools to deliver the message to the audience.** The resources available to you will play a big role in what tools (e.g., use of television, billboards, Internet, etc.) are selected to deliver the message to the target audience. Chapters 10, 11, and 12 describe the many tools available to execute a marketing plan.

### 2.3.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

**Step 6. Execute the plan.** This phase of the marketing plan is the easiest to understand. After the plan is completed, it needs to be executed, preferably with a single individual firmly in charge and responsible.

**Step 7. Monitor and evaluate the plan.** All marketing plans, no matter how well thought out and executed must be monitored and evaluated to determine if the stated goals and objectives are being met. The monitoring and evaluation results might range from directly quantifiable results for some campaigns to anecdotal reports for others. The simple question to be answered is “Are we meeting the goals and objectives we set in our marketing plan?” If not, the plan needs to be modified.

Each of these steps is described in greater detail in Parts 2 and 3 of the Guidebook.

**PART 2**

**PREPARATION AND EXECUTION  
OF A MARKETING PLAN**

# CHAPTER 3

## SCOPE OF YOUR MARKETING PLAN

- 3.1 Step 1—Defining Marketing Goals and Objectives
- 3.2 Assemble the Planning Team
- 3.3 Brainstorm the Marketing Issues
- 3.4 Marketing Goals and Objectives—First Draft
- 3.5 Research Findings: Marketing Goals Reported by Airport Managers

### 3.1 STEP 1—DEFINING MARKETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The first step in creating a marketing plan is to define marketing goals and objectives. Every marketing program needs a scope, goals, and measurable objectives to make sure that the marketing effort is working. It is important to put time into this initial planning effort. It will require brainstorming, analysis, review, and probably revision. Key stakeholders of the airport should participate.



Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

This Guidebook recommends two passes at defining the scope of your marketing plan. Most airports know the important issues and opportunities to address. Maybe there is one single issue or two or three areas to address. They should be identified in this first step. Then, following further analysis of the situation, it is useful to come back to the initial marketing goals and objectives and fine tune them. This process allows consideration of multiple viewpoints and the opportunity to prioritize and narrow the marketing goals to a manageable set.

### 3.2 ASSEMBLE THE PLANNING TEAM

Marketing programs involve airport staff, volunteers, stakeholders, and your customer base. It is important to get your planning team on board as soon as possible. The planning team should include representation from individuals and groups that have a vested interest in the long-term success of the airport. Select team members that (1) represent key stakeholders in your airport, (2) are willing to commit time to the effort, and (3) will serve as good contributors. Make sure that there is cross representation on your team. This will help the group



consider different futures for the airport and different marketing activities. Ideally, the planning team should include representation from the following groups:

- Airport management
- Airport tenants
- Businesses that use the airport
- Airport governing body (City Council, Airport Authority, or Advisory Committee)
- Economic development group

### 3.3 BRAINSTORM THE MARKETING ISSUES

Before defining the scope of your marketing program, you might want to look over the list in Exhibit 3.1 and ask the planning team members to jot down their first thoughts. This exercise is intended to elicit your first impression or “top of mind awareness.” It is a useful place to start.

#### Exhibit 3.1—Issues Exercise for the Planning Team.

- Our customers think . . .
- Our employees always . . .
- We stand out from the competition because . . .
- Our airport is known for its . . .
- We are great at . . .
- We want our customers to . . .
- We want to be remembered for . . .
- We are proud of . . .
- What makes us different is . . .
- We have gotten better at . . .
- We strive to . . .
- We have achieved . . .
- Our community thinks . . .
- Our community would like . . .

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

In the case of Greeley-Weld County Airport, their planning team reached the following conclusions about the report:

- We strive to provide a safe, efficiently run, cost-competitive facility that offers excellent access to the northern Front Range and Denver metropolitan area and a high level of service to our airport tenants and visitors.
- We are known as the fifth busiest airport in Colorado.
- Our customers like the outstanding restaurant at the airport and the terminal.
- The pilots appreciate the 10,000-ft runway, unrestricted airspace and instrument landing systems (ILS), but would like to see the air traffic control tower finally built.
- We strive to keep the airfield open with the use of excellent snow removal services and a fully capable Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting response team.
- We are proud to generate \$121 million in economic activity each year.
- We are proud to be economically self-sufficient. Airport revenues cover all operating expenses.
- We strive to improve access to the east side of the airport, extend infrastructure, and attract new business to this area of the airport.

Following this exercise, you can group the responses and prioritize them. This will give you information about how the airport is perceived and what are the main issues.

### 3.4 MARKETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES—FIRST DRAFT

In this section, you will prepare a first draft of the airport marketing goals and objectives. First, review the definitions of goals and objectives and the examples provided. At this stage, exact wording is not as important as identifying the most important marketing issues to address.

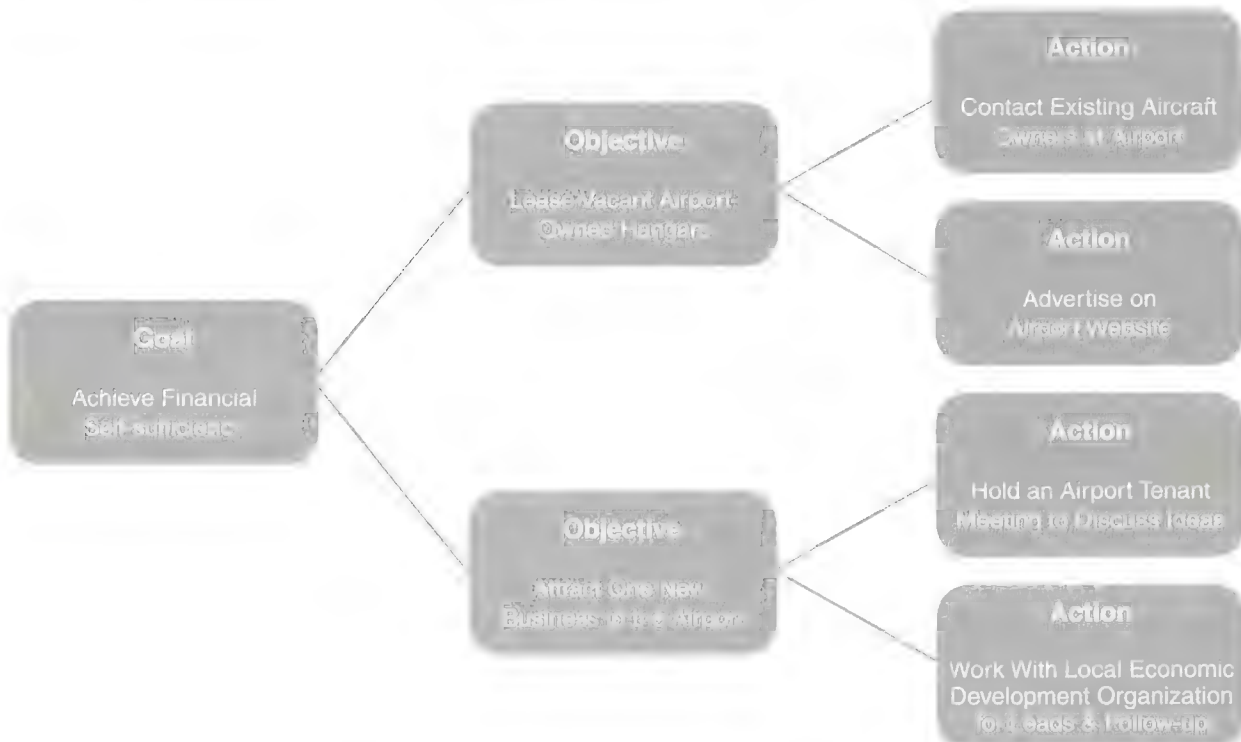
#### 3.4.1 DEFINITIONS

In marketing textbooks and articles, goals and objectives are sometimes used interchangeably. To avoid confusion, have the planning team adopt these working definitions:

- **Goals** are general statements about what an airport wants and expects to accomplish in the future.
- **Objectives** are defined as realistic and measurable targets established to evaluate and track progress during the implementation of the marketing plan. Marketing objectives are typically short term and achievable within the timeframe of the marketing plan.
- **Actions** are specific activities that support achievement of an objective.

Exhibit 3.2 provides an example of an airport's goals, objectives, and actions. Remember that your objectives should be realistic and achievable. When an objective has a measurable target, it is easy to know if you are making progress. After the objective is set, you can identify activities to achieve the objective.

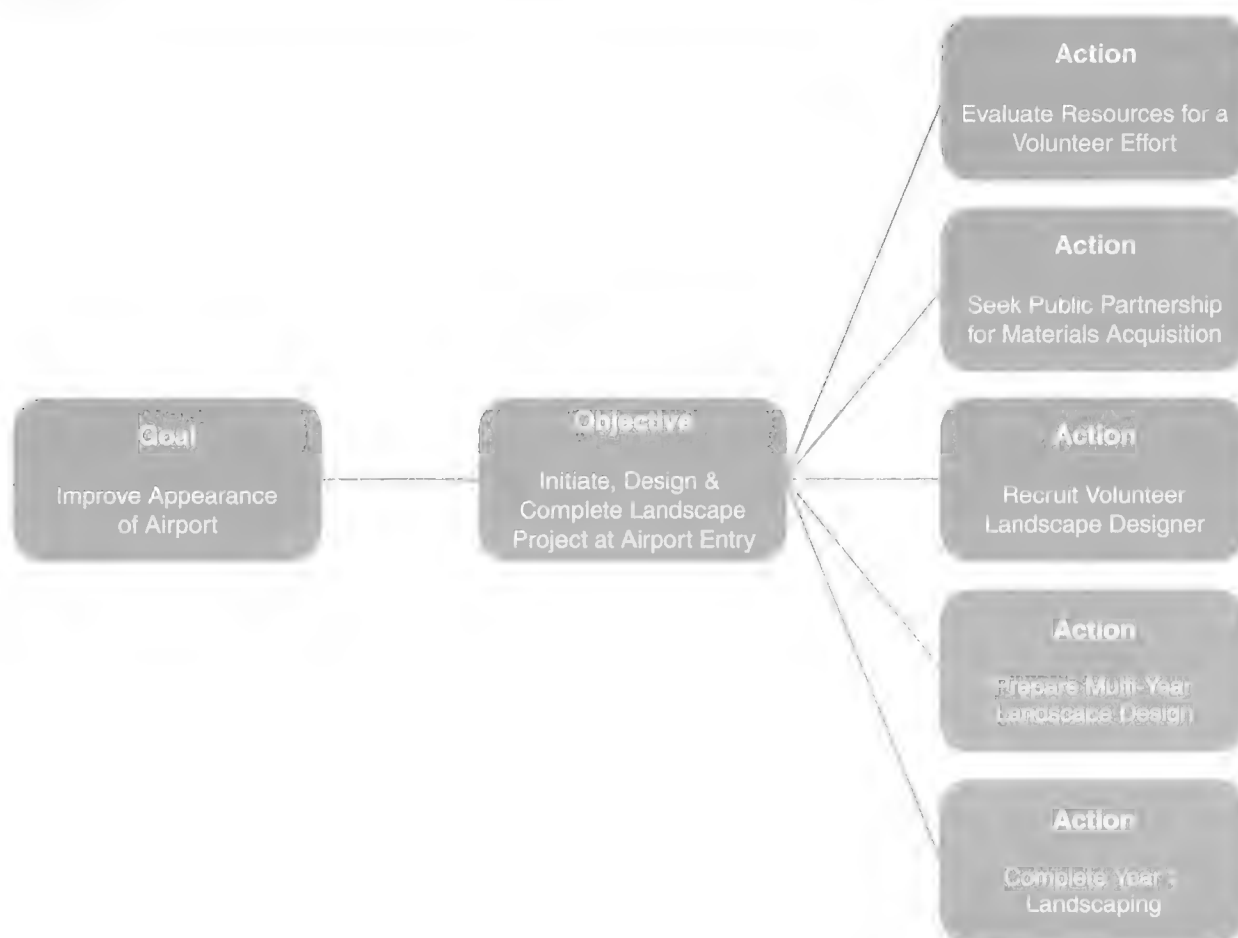
**Exhibit 3.2—Example of Airport Marketing Goals, Objectives, Actions.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

The example shown in Exhibit 3.3 is applicable to many general aviation airports. It shows how Greeley-Weld County Airport translated the goal to improve the appearance of the airport into a specific objective and several actions.

**Exhibit 3.3—Example of Greeley-Weld County Airport Marketing Goal, Objectives, Year 1 Actions.**



Source: Adapted from Greeley-Weld County Airport Economic Development Plan

### 3.4.2 EXAMPLES FROM YUBA COUNTY AND CHATTANOOGA AIRPORTS

Two other airport examples might further stimulate your discussion of goals and objectives.

#### EXAMPLE #1: YUBA COUNTY AIRPORT'S GOALS

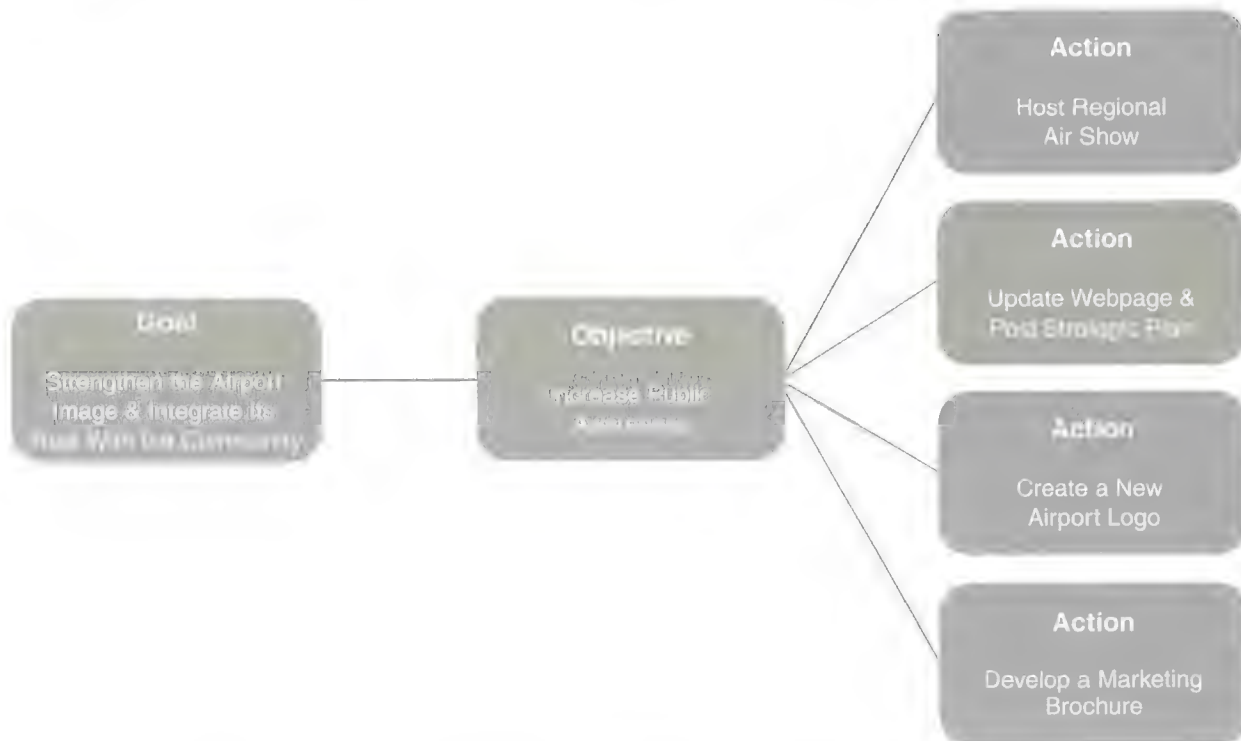
Yuba County Airport, a 1,000 acre general aviation facility located in north central California, prepared a strategic marketing plan for the airport and listed the following goals:

1. "Strengthen the Airport image and integrate its role within the Yuba-Sutter community.
2. Support the economic development activities of the County.
3. Develop programs, policies, and procedures to improve and enhance the financial growth of the Yuba County Airport.
4. Stimulate private and public interest and investment in the Airport and industrial parks.

5. Sustain and protect the airport and its enhancements.
6. Continue to participate and sponsor pilot safety programs.”

Taking the first goal as an example, Exhibit 3.4 diagrams the goal, objective, and action items listed in the Yuba County Airport Strategic Plan 2008.

**Exhibit 3.4—Example of Yuba County Airport Marketing Goal, Objectives, and Actions.**



Source: Yuba County Airport, Strategic Plan 2008. Adapted by KRAMER aerotek, inc.

## EXAMPLE #2: CHATTANOOGA'S AIR SERVICE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Some commercial service airports create separate marketing plans devoted entirely to air service. One example is "A Strategic Plan to Improve Commercial Air Service in Chattanooga," developed by Chattanooga as part of its Challenge 2010 program. It lists five goals: (1) bring fares into balance, (2) improve airline service, (3) improve customer service, (4) market aggressively, and (5) create a fund to address unforeseen circumstances.

Within Chattanooga's fourth goal to "market aggressively" are the following separate objectives:

- "Reduce airport leakage by aggressively advertising and promoting Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport as a convenient, reliable, cost-competitive regional alternative to flying out of Atlanta, Nashville, Birmingham, and Knoxville.
- Reverse lingering misperceptions about Chattanooga air service and heighten awareness of the Chattanooga airport.
- Re-engage the travel agencies as partners in meeting the challenge.
- Encourage community ownership of the air service problem and its solutions, much as Chattanooga Venture did in the mid-80s with its 'commitment portfolio.' This includes engaging the local media in a partnership to 'get the talk right' about the airport and to encourage locals to avail themselves of its service."



Chattanooga's Challenge 2010 Strategic Plan includes goals, short-term objectives (6–12 months), mid-term objectives (12–24 months), and long-term objectives (24–60 months). The objectives are realistic and measurable and lead directly into an action plan.

### 3.4.3 YOUR AIRPORT'S MARKETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Now it is time to draft your airport's marketing goals and objectives. The first draft of marketing goals and objectives is an ideal task for the planning team. Start with the top issues that you prioritized at the beginning of this chapter and separate out those issues that would benefit directly from marketing or public relations.

This is not an easy task. There is often a temptation to describe goals and objectives in great detail, but a simple statement is ideal. Exhibit 3.5 presents a few topics for your goals.

#### Exhibit 3.5—Topics Covered by Airport Marketing Goals.

- Community awareness of the airport
- Public relations around airport projects, safety, noise, and land use
- Air service development, retention, or reinstatement
- Passenger growth and retention
- Growth of existing activities and business
- Growth or development of a new activity/business at the airport

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### TYPES OF MARKETING GOALS

If you are having difficulty formulating goals and objectives, you might consider the most common marketing goals for all industries. These include the following:

- Market Expansion
- Market Focus or Segmentation
- Cost Leadership
- Quality

A brief description of the different goals follows.

**Market Expansion** is the most common goal in marketing. Market expansion is accomplished by attracting new customers or new users to the airport. This is typically accomplished by (1) attracting users from a new geographic area and/or (2) offering new products or services to the airport's existing or new users.

In the late 1990s, network airlines accomplished their goal of market share expansion by increasing frequencies in markets that they wanted to dominate. Airports also sought to enhance their position as either an important spoke in a carrier's hub structure or as a focus city.

On the general aviation side, some airports have pursued their goal of market expansion by hiring outside developers to build facilities that will attract new business or based aircraft to the airport.

**Market Focus** means specializing in a particular service or focusing on a particular type of customer. The benefits of a market focus goal are as follows:

- The airport is able to concentrate its resources for a particular group of users.
- The airport's specialty may gain local, regional, national, or international recognition.
- The airport can effectively differentiate itself from competing airports.

Exhibit 3.6 is an example of market specialization. After Hurricane Katrina, Houma-Terrebonne Airport in Louisiana became a staging area for offshore oil helicopter support. As a result of identifying and acting on an immediate demand, Houma-Terrebonne Airport now serves as a base for several helicopter companies that provide logistics support to offshore oil operations in the Gulf of Mexico.

#### Exhibit 3.6—Houma-Terrebonne Airport: An Example of Market Focus Strategy.

---



Photo Copyright Oscar Bernardi via Airlines.net

**Cost Leadership** means striving to offer the lowest cost alternatives in the area, for example: lowest airport rates and charges, lowest cost air service, competitive ground leases, and lowest rates on aircraft services or fuel.

**Quality** means striving to offer users a higher quality product or service than the competition. Location, convenience and safety are among the most important factors for basing an aircraft. Quality of customer service and culture projected by aircraft servicing companies and fixed based operators (FBOs) are also important factors.

#### SMART OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

---

Based on your airport priorities, draft a simple statement of the goals for your marketing plan. For each goal, write down a set of objectives. The objectives are really the starting point of the marketing plan and will answer the question: "Where do we want to go?" Marketing experts talk about **SMART** objectives. These are objectives that are

1. **S**pecific,
2. **M**easurable,
3. **A**chievable,
4. **R**ealistic, and
5. **T**imed.

Goals that have to do with passengers, airport development, airport operations, or airport finance lend themselves to SMART objectives because achievement is readily measured as shown in Exhibit 3.7.

---

#### Exhibit 3.7—Examples of SMART Objectives for Airport Activity.

---

- **Market Share:** Increase passenger enplanements by 5%
  - **Hangar Occupancy:** Fill vacant hangars owned by airport (known quantity) within 12 months
  - **Fuel Sales:** Increase gallons (or fuel flowage fees) of fuel sold by 10%
  - **Customer Growth:** Obtain a Department of Defense fuel contract within 12 months
  - **Tenant Expansion:** Issue one new ground lease to a new tenant in the next 18 months
- 

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

Not surprisingly, some goals and objectives are more difficult to quantify such as goals that address airport awareness and identity. Progress on these goals is more readily measured by accomplishment of certain activities or separate awareness surveys. For example, you may want to focus this year's marketing plan on raising community awareness of the airport. Exhibit 3.8 shows some measurable actions associated with each objective.

---

#### Exhibit 3.8—Actions That Demonstrate Effort to Achieve Awareness and Identify Goals.

---

- **Objective # 1:** Increase visibility of the airport in the media and on the Internet.
    - **Action 1:** Obtain three feature stories in local media (radio, TV, newspaper) in the next 12 months.
    - **Action 2:** Increase hit rate on the airport website by 15%.
  - **Objective # 2:** Raise awareness of aviation in the schools.
    - **Action 3:** Increase the number of school tours of the airport to five per year.
  - **Objective # 3:** Raise awareness of the airport's economic contribution to the community.
    - **Action 4:** Publish and distribute economic impact brochure.
    - **Action 5:** Organize quarterly speaking engagements at civic groups.
- 

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

---

## YOUR AIRPORT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

---

In summary, your airport's marketing goals and objectives will be written to address the most important areas where marketing and public relations can have a positive impact. Exhibit 3.9 is a short worksheet that you can use as a framework to draft marketing goals and objectives.



### Exhibit 3.9—Marketing Goals and Objectives Worksheet.

#### Airport's Most Important Marketing Goal

SMART objectives to achieve this goal in the next 12 months:

1.1:

1.2:

#### Airport's Second Most Important Goal

SMART objectives to achieve this goal:

2.1:

2.2:

2.3:

Additional Goals and Objectives as needed.

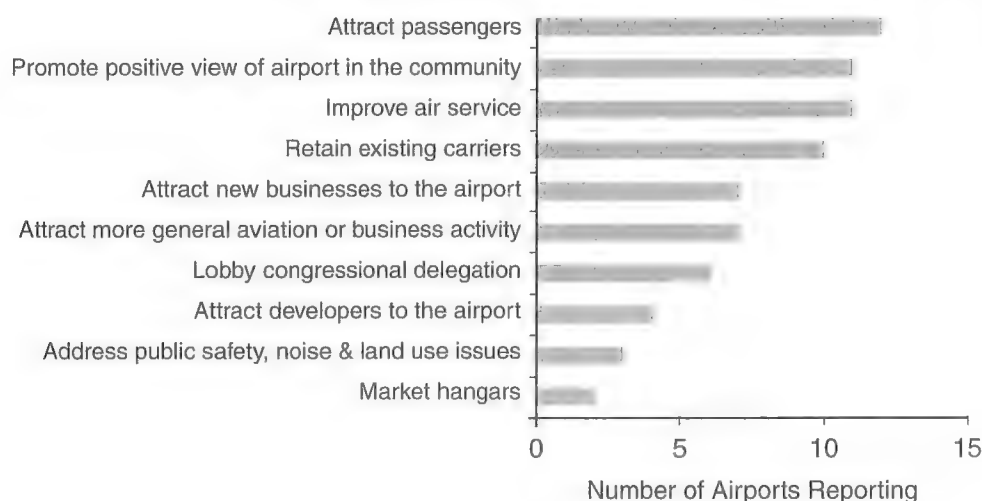
Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 3.5 RESEARCH FINDINGS: MARKETING GOALS REPORTED BY AIRPORT MANAGERS

For those readers interested in more ideas about marketing goals, this section contains findings from research completed for this project. Managers of small commercial service airports and general aviation airports were asked to rank a set of airport marketing goals that they thought were important. Twelve commercial service airports and sixteen general aviation airports were interviewed.

#### COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS—MARKETING GOALS

- Nearly all commercial service airports reported that their primary marketing goals—in terms of importance, time devoted, and money spent—related to air service development. Improving air service, attracting passengers, and retaining existing carriers are the three primary marketing goals of small commercial service airports.
- In connection with air service, a number of airports said specifically that raising “awareness” in the region was their primary focus. In other words, many area residents did not know that their local airport offered commercial air service, or assumed that the local service was not competitive with that offered at larger airports.
- The more general goal of promoting a positive view of the airport in the community is considered of equal importance to air service development, but is not ranked as high in terms of time devoted or money spent.
- The marketing goals ranking next in importance are (a) attracting new businesses to the airport and (b) attracting more general aviation.
- Slightly more airports placed greater importance on lobbying their congressional delegations than on attracting developers to the airport. This is likely to be a function of airports seeking help with Essential Air Service issues or federal grants (see Exhibit 3.10).

**Exhibit 3.10—Marketing Goals Reported by Commercial Service Airports.**

Source: Airport Manager Survey 2008, Oliver Wyman

### GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT—MARKETING GOALS

- For general aviation airports, the goals of attracting new business to the airport, retaining current airport tenants, and attracting more general aviation or business activity ranked as very important and were the general aviation equivalent of the air service development priorities of the commercial service airports.
- As at the commercial service airports, promoting a positive view of the airport ranked very high. For general aviation airports, this goal ranked second in importance only to attracting new business to the airport, and was the goal on which airport managers spent the most time.
- The following goals were ranked next and were of equal importance: promoting the airport to funding sources; addressing public safety, noise, and land use issues; attracting developers to the airport; and marketing hangars.
- The one unexpected marketing goal that general aviation airports listed as very important was the reinstatement of commercial air service. Three airports that had lost commercial air service listed this as one of their most important marketing priorities.
- For general aviation airports, lobbying their congressional delegation was the least important of the major marketing goals (see Exhibit 3.11).



### 7.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING PLAN

As you review your plan, determine whether it has the following characteristics (as adapted from “Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations,” Sixth Edition, Alan Andreasen and Philip Kotler, Prentice Hall, 2002):

- It is customer and service centered. The main focus of the plan must be on meeting the demand(s) of its target audience(s).
- It differentiates itself from its competitors. If possible, the airport should differentiate itself from its competitors and spell out unique reasons why users should select this airport over rivals.
- It is easily communicated. The plan needs to be simple and clear to target audiences and so that airport staff can easily understand it and talk about it.
- It is motivating. A successful plan will be adopted enthusiastically by airport stakeholders.
- It is flexible. The plan should be sufficiently broad to embrace a variety of marketing activities and to allow for mid-course corrections and unforeseen changes in the marketplace.

Consider these attributes as a check list to evaluate the content and performance of the airport’s marketing plan.

### 7.4 PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES TO WORK—COMMUNITY SUPPORT CASE STUDY

This section describes how a marketing plan to increase community support for air service is constructed from the principles presented in this chapter.

The marketing goal listed most frequently by small commercial service airports is to increase air service. This goal was also shared by airports interviewed that had lost their air service. In many respects, community support for air service is often the most important aspect of any air service development program. Airlines look carefully at the levels of community support prior to making a commitment for new or additional service. Airports have improved chances of sustaining higher levels of air service if the community is both aware and supportive of the service.

Other aspects of air service development, such as marketing programs that involve financial incentives for air carriers, marketing support provided directly to air carriers, or risk minimization programs for air carriers, are covered in *ACRP Report 18: Passenger Air Service Development Techniques*.

The basic principles presented here will apply to most airports dealing with the issue of increasing community support for air service.

#### 7.4.1 HOW COMMUNITY SUPPORT HELPS BUILD AIR SERVICE

For air service to be successful at small airports, the airport must “capture” as many passengers as possible. The ultimate goal of community support programs is to direct and focus regional demand for air service toward the local airport. Increased community support for air service is a critical ingredient in a positive cycle of air service development. When more passengers use the local air service, demand is reinforced and a positive cycle to attract additional service begins.

The primary obstacle to achieving this goal of maximizing local air service is the loss of passengers to other nearby larger airports. Passenger leakage or “diversion” occurs when passengers bypass their local airport to drive to another airport because air fares are lower or service is perceived as better. Although some amount

of diversion may be inevitable, there are many cases where it may be substantially reduced through effective marketing programs.

Thus, the goal of marketing programs aimed at increasing community support is to increase awareness of the commercial air service offered locally and to retain passengers who are otherwise driving to alternate, more distant airports.

#### 7.4.2 THE MESSAGE—SUPPORT LOCAL SERVICE

Most air service development work is incremental, helping to build traffic, which in turn makes the market more attractive and leads to new service. The cycle shown in Exhibit 7.4 describes how the process works and is part of the message conveyed to build community support.

**Exhibit 7.4—Air Service Development Cycle.**



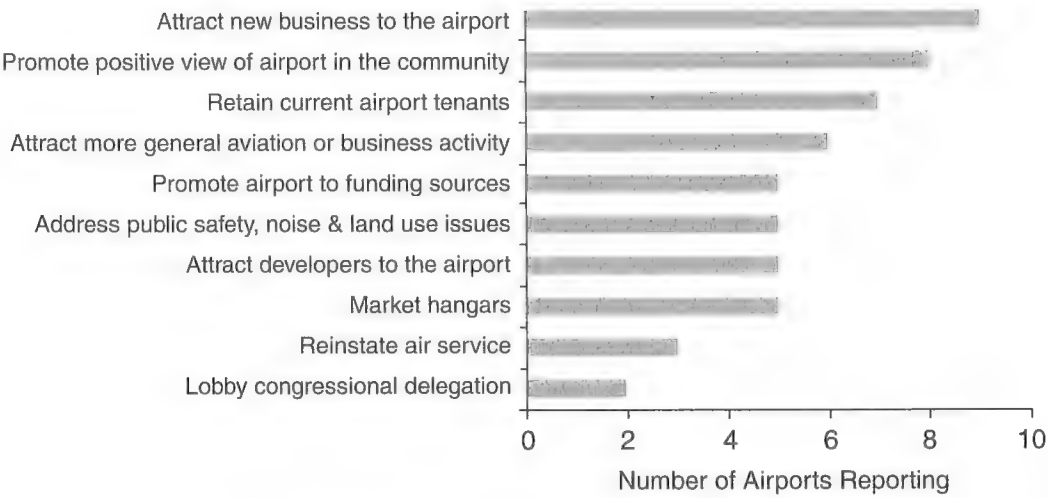
Source: Oliver Wyman

By using the air service at the local airport, residents are helping to build better air service in the future. By not using the local air service, they are doing just the opposite—contributing to a decline in air service because fewer passengers mean that the airlines provide fewer flights, which in turn makes the local airport even less attractive to local travelers.

One of the obstacles faced by many small airports in their campaign to attract more passengers is the problem of high fares. Smaller aircraft are more expensive to operate per passenger mile and fixed station costs must be allocated over a fewer number of flights at small airports. For these reasons, there is a higher cost of providing service to smaller airports which is often reflected in higher fares versus fares at nearby larger airports. As part of the assessment process described in Chapter 4, lower fares at nearby airports would be seen as a competitive disadvantage for many small airports.

Thus, an important part of the message conveyed to gain community support must focus on the strengths of the local airport—namely convenience, less driving, potentially lower costs for parking, easier check-ins, and so forth. Communities have successfully increased use of their airports through marketing campaigns that

**Exhibit 3.11—General Aviation Airport Marketing Goals.**



Source: Airport Manager Survey 2008, KRAMER aerotek, inc.

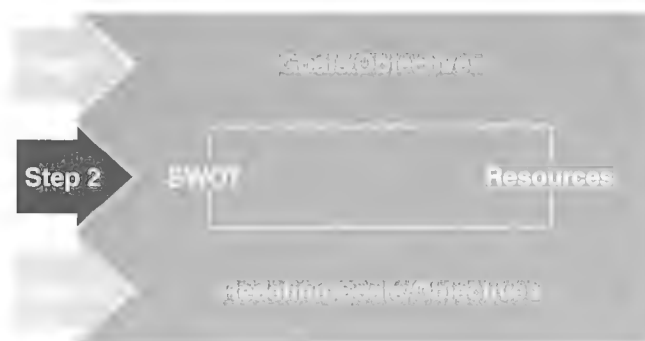
# CHAPTER 4

## ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

- 4.1 Step 2—SWOT Analysis and Resource Assessment
- 4.2 SWOT Analysis
- 4.3 Resource Assessment
- 4.4 Conclusions

### 4.1 STEP 2—SWOT ANALYSIS AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Chapter 3 outlined the initial steps for identifying important marketing issues for the airport. This chapter outlines the steps to dig deeper and clarify the airport's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the resources available (people and money) to help market the airport.



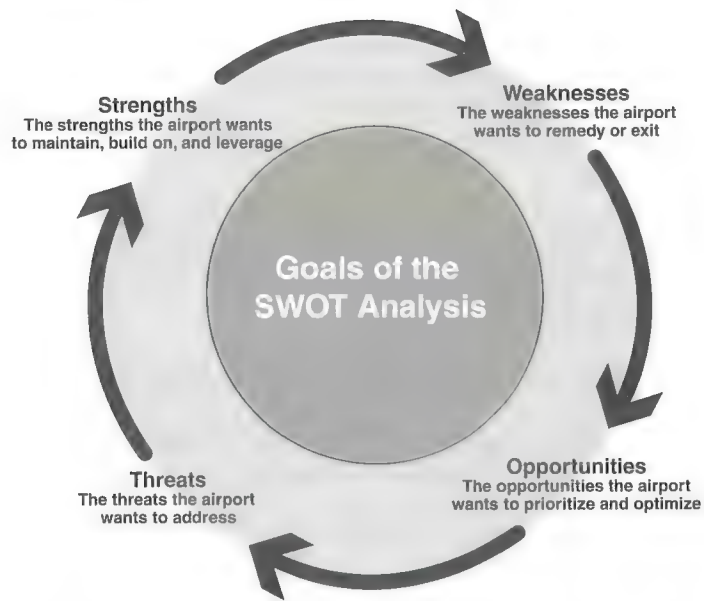
Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

An airport SWOT analysis and resource assessment (referred to collectively as a self-assessment) is critical to formulating an effective and focused marketing plan. With this analysis, it will be easier to (1) focus the goals of the marketing plan, (2) strengthen the airport's identity, (3) clarify the messages that the airport will convey, and (4) and construct a marketing program within a framework of available resources.

Airports that do not have a current marketing plan will find this chapter helpful. Airports that already have a marketing plan may want to skim this chapter. For those readers interested in a detailed approach to self-assessment (including useful worksheets), please refer to Chapter 13.

### 4.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

The most important analysis underlying any airport marketing plan is the SWOT analysis, an assessment of the airport's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. Conducting a SWOT analysis is necessary because the results of the analysis show the paths forward for the airport that are realistic versus those that are not. The four categories of information collected in a SWOT analysis are described in Exhibit 4.1.

**Exhibit 4.1—Diagram of a SWOT Analysis.**

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

Multiple sources of information, both from self assessments and from external sources, may be used to complete the SWOT analysis. What is important is not the source of the information but that the airport obtains an honest and accurate picture of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

One source of information used in the SWOT analysis is customer reviews. There are many ways to get customer feedback: postcard or Internet surveys; comment blogs or surveys on the airport website; comment cards in the terminal or at the FBO. For tenants, simple surveys or a tenant event such as a meeting, happy hour, or tenant appreciation day, are excellent ways to get feedback for SWOT analysis. Exhibit 4.2 is a set of prompts to engage your customers in how the airport is used and perceived.

**Exhibit 4.2—Topic Prompts for Customer Reviews.**

#### **VISITORS, PASSENGERS, AND PILOTS**

- We use the airport for . . .
- These services are well priced . . .
- These services are too expensive . . .
- The most convenient aspects of the airport are . . .
- The least convenient aspects of the airport are . . .
- Would you recommend the airport to others?
- Was it easy to find the airport?
- Aircraft/car parking was . . .
- General cleanliness of the terminal was . . .
- Your encounter with airport staff was . . .
- I will remember the airport for . . .



## TENANTS

- The most important airport improvement is . . .
- We chose to lease at this airport because . . .
- Other businesses that may be interested in this airport are . . .
- Our customers like this airport because . . .

---

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

One of the primary purposes of completing a SWOT analysis is to enable the airport to determine how it compares to its peers and the competition. What unique advantages does the airport have that it can take advantage of to attract passengers, pilots, businesses, or other tenants?

In general, for commercial service airports, the following information is useful to compare with competitors:

- Air service offered: destinations, carriers, frequency, aircraft type
- Business and leisure air fares in the airport's top markets
- History of air service at nearby airports
- Runway lengths and navigational aids available
- Rates of diversion to competing airports

A competitor analysis of a very small commercial service airport to a very large commercial service airport is not always useful. For example, comparing Dubois Regional Airport to nearby Pittsburgh International Airport would be of limited value. On the other hand, Orlando Sanford Airport skillfully carved out a leisure market niche by understanding the opportunities presented by destination traffic bound for the Greater Orlando area, even though at one time all air service occurred at Orlando International Airport.

For general aviation airports, the comparative metrics are different. General aviation airports have a diverse customer base, so a competitor analysis must focus on a particular target customer such as aircraft owners, pilots, FBOs, or other airport tenants.

For aircraft owners, fractional owners, or pilots, a competitor analysis would look at the following:

- Suitability of airfield for a particular aircraft
- Proximity to home or work
- Availability and cost of hangars or tie downs
- Level of service available—fueling, aircraft maintenance, etc.
- Local tax structure and aircraft registration fees versus nearby states
- Atmosphere and culture
- Navigational aids (including presence of a control tower)
- Possibilities for self-fueling

For airport tenants, the analysis would compare the following:

- Availability and cost of improved or unimproved land
- Airport minimum standards
- Other synergistic activities on or near the airport
- Airport's access to highways or trains
- Incentive packages offered by competing airports

### 4.2.1 SUGGESTIONS AND EXAMPLES FOR YOUR SWOT

Exhibit 4.3 provides a list of possible responses to the SWOT analysis that may give you ideas for your airport. In addition, two airport examples of SWOT analyses are also presented. One is a summary table from the Greeley-Weld County Airport SWOT analysis that the students completed as part of their project to make a marketing plan for the airport. The other example summarizes SWOT findings for Arnold Palmer Airport in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

**Exhibit 4.3—Ideas for Possible SWOT Responses.**

#### STRENGTHS

- Strong demand for business travel
- Population growth in the region and community
- Strong presence of corporate jet activity
- Community actively supports airport
- Local college uses airport for aviation programs
- Existing military logistics center
- Good location for specialized training in . . .
- Excellent airfield and/or terminal facilities
- Available hangar space
- 24-hour duty officer

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Additional frequencies or new air service destinations
- Development/expansion of industrial or office park next to airport
- Joint marketing with other economic development groups
- Contract tower
- Increased fuel sales
- Additional itinerant traffic
- Training facilities at airport
- New technology to increase capacity

#### WEAKNESSES

- Airport located less than 1 hour from a larger airport
- Airport has low visibility with passengers and potential users
- Multi-county governance complicates decision making
- Airfield in need of repair
- Business planning and marketing funds are scarce
- Airport noise and truck traffic controversial in community
- Airport rates and charges inconsistently applied
- FBO not responsive to existing customer base
- No air service

#### THREATS

- More air service at alternate airports
- High air fares non-competitive
- Current air service unreliable
- Vocal opponents to the airport
- Encroachment of development near airport
- Insufficient funding to maintain and enhance airport

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### SWOT FOR GREELEY-WELD COUNTY AIRPORT

Chapter 2 began with an overview of Greeley-Weld County Airport and how the airport engaged students from the Metro State to develop a marketing plan. The students spent 5 months on the plan. One of their first tasks was a SWOT analysis. They interviewed airport staff, tenants, and stakeholders to better understand the actual and perceived strengths and weaknesses of the airport along with the potential opportunities and threats.

Greeley-Weld County Airport has two major competitors: Fort Collins-Loveland Airport and Front Range Airport. Fort Collins-Loveland Municipal Airport is located approximately 20 miles west of the Greeley-Weld County Airport and is considered the most direct competition. Over the past several years, both airports have competed for the same business, both new and existing. In several instances, tenants located at one airport have relocated to the other, and vice versa. Also, with the closing of the Fort Collins Downtown Airport, many businesses and aircraft owners chose between the two airports for relocation.

Front Range Airport is located approximately 45 miles south of the Greeley-Weld County Airport, and just south-east of the Denver International Airport (DIA). Front Range Airport is comparable in size, operations, and services to the Greeley-Weld County Airport, and in the past, has directly competed with it for business. Adams County in recent years has offered economic incentives to companies willing to locate at the Front Range Airport. Those incentives, along with its proximity to the Denver metro area, have made that airport attractive to investors looking to develop facilities. However, Front Range Airport is very close to DIA, and thus, is subject to airspace and flight restrictions imposed by DIA.

The Greeley-Weld County Airport is not subject to the same air space restrictions as Front Range Airport. The runway is also longer than the runway at Fort Collins-Loveland Municipal Airport, allowing for the operation of larger aircraft, particularly in summer months. Based on this background, a summary of the Greeley-Weld County Airport SWOT analysis is shown in Exhibit 4.4.

#### **Exhibit 4.4—Greeley-Weld County Airport, Colorado SWOT Analysis.**

##### **STRENGTHS**

- Airport infrastructure: runway length (10,000 ft), ILS, available land for development, outstanding fly in restaurant, great terminal/administration building, 40 hangars with 200 aircraft capacity.
- Operations: aircraft rescue & firefighting capability, snow removal fleet, 5th busiest airport in CO, great weather.
- Other: good location north of Denver metro area, not landlocked.
- Excellent website.

##### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Development opportunities: Weld County is the second fastest growing county in the nation, availability of additional land around airport for development.
- Funding: availability of federal and state grants, in an enterprise zone.
- Development of air traffic control tower.
- Compete for area aviation business.
- Aviation Industry: market to military for training, emerging very light jet market.
- Community programs: Greeley Stampede, community branding.
- Affiliation with local educational institutions and local college programs.

##### **WEAKNESSES**

- Airport infrastructure: access road issues, utility infrastructure on east side, lack of air traffic control tower.
- Airport facilities: limited vehicle parking, public entryway appearance.
- Aviation services: limited.
- Policies and practices: differing goals between tenants and board, control of encroachment, unpredictability of future funding.
- Marketing and promotion: work with FBO to partner in marketing.

##### **THREATS**

- Competition from other area airports.
- Population growth to the west in Windsor, closer to Fort Collins-Loveland Airport and away from Greeley-Weld County Airport.
- Insufficient future funding to build needed infrastructure, develop east side and construct air traffic control tower.
- National security issues pertaining to aviation.

*(continued)*

CONCLUSIONS

- Work with State of Colorado and City of Greeley to improve access road and signage to the airport.
- Continue to advertise at National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) and dispatcher conventions.
- Direct advertising back to website.
- Make air traffic control tower a high funding priority to pursue through state and federal programs.
- Plan and launch volunteer campaign to improve appearance of airport entry.

Source: Greeley-Weld County Airport, Marketing Plan 2007

SWOT FOR ARNOLD PALMER AIRPORT, LATROBE, PENNSYLVANIA

Arnold Palmer Airport in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, is located approximately 60 miles from Pittsburgh. At its peak, Latrobe had nine nonstop flights per day to Pittsburgh on US Airways Express. When US Airways went through bankruptcy (twice) from 2002–2005, it dramatically reduced operations at its Pittsburgh hub. In May 2004, Latrobe lost all commercial service. In addition, due to its close proximity to Pittsburgh, it did not qualify as an Essential Air Service city. Thus, it could not look to the government for subsidized support for air service, but rather, had to rely on its own resources.

In the case of Arnold Palmer Airport, the major threat was the scale of air service offered at nearby Pittsburgh International. In terms of opportunities, however, it turns out that because of Delta/Northwest’s large Detroit hub, many Latrobe travelers to international destinations could connect more conveniently by flying from Latrobe to Detroit and connecting directly to international flights than by driving to Pittsburgh and flying to US Airways’ international hub at Philadelphia.

Fortunately, the community had strong business travel demand from local companies, including Kennametal, a \$2 billion company headquartered in Latrobe with facilities across the globe. Sony, Timken, and Alcoa are also located in Latrobe. The community had strong local marketing support from the airport and other local business leaders who helped the community secure service from Northwest Airlines to its Detroit hub. A simplified SWOT analysis for Latrobe is summarized in Exhibit 4.5.

Exhibit 4.5—Arnold Palmer Airport SWOT Analysis.

STRENGTHS

- Strong business travel demand.
- Strong community willingness to invest in projects that make sense.
- Conveniently located and friendly local airport.

WEAKNESSES

- Within driving distance of much larger airport—Pittsburgh.
  - Limited market size.
  - Community knowledge of what it would take to make the new service successful.
- (continued)

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- A new carrier could attract a large share of high fare business passengers at Latrobe, including some flying to Asia and Europe, which that carrier would not attract if it operated at Pittsburgh, where US Airways remained the largest carrier.

**THREATS**

- Any Latrobe service must compete against more frequent service offered at Pittsburgh.
- Poor or irregular service at Latrobe would quickly result in passengers abandoning the service to drive to Pittsburgh.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- A high level of customer service is important.
- The business traveler should be the focus.

---

Source: Oliver Wyman

**4.2.2 SUMMARIZING YOUR SWOT FINDINGS**

Have the planning team rank responses for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats from most important to least important. Every airport will have different answers. The SWOT analysis is a top view, so first impressions are the most important. The goal is to be able to complete the statements suggested in Exhibit 4.6.



**Exhibit 4.6—SWOT Summary Worksheet.**

**1) The airport's key strengths are:**

---



---

**2) The airport's best opportunities are:**

---



---

**3) The airport has weaknesses/needs to improve in these areas:**

---



---

**4) The airport should monitor and/or address the following threats to its competitive position or sustainability:**

---



---



---

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

## 4.3 RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

An effective marketing program must take into account the resources available. For small airports, the best approach to this subject involves (1) taking inventory of recent marketing activities, (2) assessing internal and external staffing and expertise available, and (3) assessing funding available.

### 4.3.1 TAKING INVENTORY OF RECENT MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Marketing an airport successfully requires a variety of activities that might include networking and public speaking, effective writing of marketing materials, development and maintenance of an airport website, active community involvement in local organizations, and so forth. Exhibit 4.7 shows a sample of a “current marketing activities” worksheet. The worksheet illustrates activities that require funding and those that can be done with existing staff. Although the inventory is a simple list of activities, costs, and resources, it should also prompt consideration of which past activities have been the most and least effective.

**Exhibit 4.7—Example of an Inventory of Marketing Activities for the Last 12 Months.**

Marketing Activity	Purpose	Estimated Total Cost	Airport Expenditure	Funding/Staffing Resources
Air Service Billboard	Expand Market	\$25,000	\$2,500	Airport Budget, State Grant
Airport Open House	Raise Airport Awareness	\$10,000	\$2,000	Airport Budget, State Grant, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Volunteers
Advertise in Economic Development Magazine	Expand Market	\$2,000	\$2,000	Airport Budget
Speak at Chamber Luncheon	Remind Community about Airport	None	None	None
Website Update	Position Airport in Region, Provide Public Information	\$3,000	\$3,000	Airport Budget, Chamber, In-Kind Services
Young Eagles Program	Community Education/Outreach	\$500	\$250	Airport Budget, Private Donations

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 4.3.2 ASSESSING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAFFING AND EXPERTISE AVAILABLE

Most small airports have no dedicated marketing staff; airport managers typically handle marketing along with many other duties. However, small airports have many options to pull together a marketing team using a variety of either free or reduced cost resources in the community. Professional advertising agencies should not be excluded because of budget limitations. Michael J. Henley and Diane L. Hodiak, authors of *Fund Raising and Marketing in the One-Person Shop* (Development Resource Center, 1997) suggest approaching advertising agencies or marketing firms in the community that are looking for projects that will allow them to use their creativity in new ways while supporting a worthy cause either for a discounted fee or as pro bono work. Ideally, the agencies involved would view the initial discounted or pro bono work as the first step in a process likely to lead to future business.



There are a number of other local options to consider when looking for qualified resources to help. They include the following:

- Local colleges and universities (professors, students, interns, and employees)
- Economic development groups at the local, regional, or state level
- Chamber of Commerce
- City staff
- Members of the airport board or governing group
- Individual volunteers
- Local media
- Consultants
- Advertising agencies
- Networking with all of the above groups to find other available resources

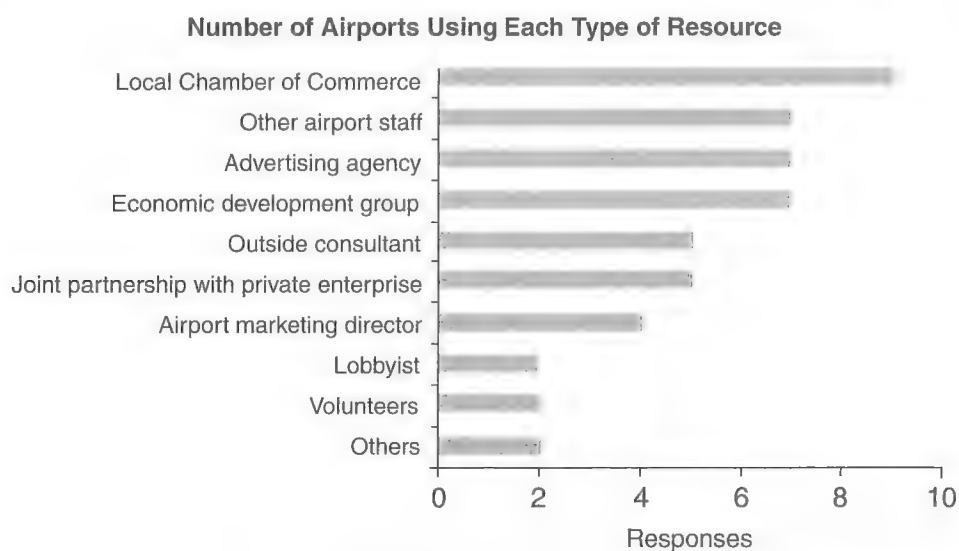
## EXTERNAL STAFFING AND EXPERTISE USED BY SMALL COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS

Research in connection with this project included interviews with 12 small commercial service airports regarding their marketing programs. Not surprisingly, at most of the smallest airports interviewed, marketing was a function handled by the airport manager along with other responsibilities. Only the largest airports had a dedicated full-time marketing person. At one of these larger airports, Ft. Wayne, the primary air service marketing person was employed by the Chamber of Commerce, while the airport also employed a public relations person on staff.

Among the smaller airports, only one reported having any marketing staff beyond the airport director. At Dubois Regional Airport in Pennsylvania, the airport employs a part-time marketing person.

In terms of outside help, a majority of the airports interviewed work closely with the Chamber of Commerce or economic development group and/or make use of local advertising agencies. Also, five of the airports reported using outside consultants to assist in their marketing activities. Exhibit 4.8 shows a breakdown of the outside entities that help small commercial service airports with their marketing.

**Exhibit 4.8—External Resources Used by Commercial Service Airports.**



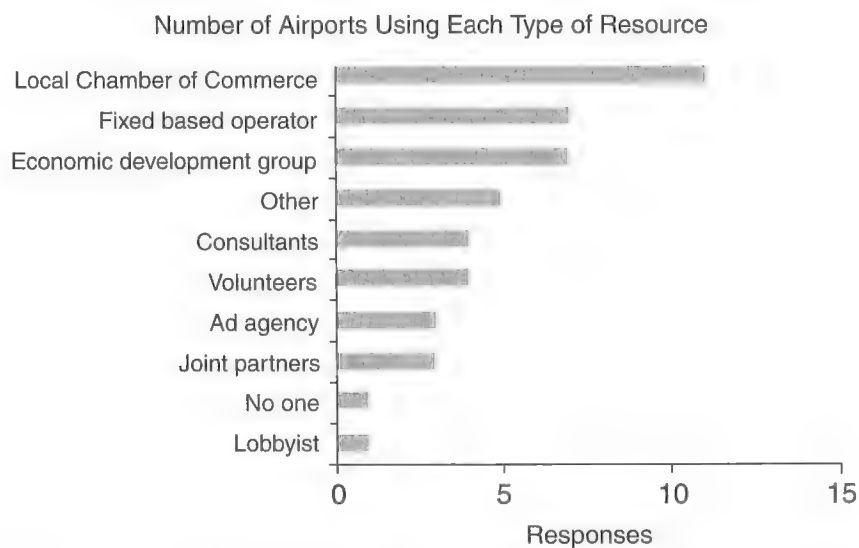
Source: Airport Marketing Survey 2008

## EXTERNAL STAFFING AND EXPERTISE USED BY GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

General aviation airports have fewer staff resources than commercial service airports. Of the 16 airports surveyed, 13 have no direct marketing staff members. They either do all the marketing work themselves or with some administrative support.

As with commercial service airports, general aviation airports use a variety of external resources for marketing support. The most common are the local Chambers of Commerce, the economic development organizations, and the FBOs. These groups help fund marketing activities, staff events, and provide new business leads. Airports also often use resources at local colleges and universities for airport economic impact studies, business plans, and marketing plans. Exhibit 4.9 shows survey results.

**Exhibit 4.9—External Resources Used by General Aviation Airports.**



Source: Airport Marketing Survey 2008

### 4.3.3 ASSESSING FUNDING AVAILABLE

In addition to evaluating internal and external staffing available, the airport manager or planning team should evaluate potential funds (and funding sources) available for marketing. How much does the airport need to cover from its own budget versus how much can be “raised” through other possible funding sources such as (1) grants, (2) donations, (3) in-kind contributions, (4) matching funds, and (5) cost sharing with other groups?

Even though the details of the marketing plan are a work in progress, it is important to develop preliminary estimates so that the marketing plan can be properly scaled to available resources.

In the case of Latrobe, a major issue for the airport manager was getting the public to understand what it would take to make a new service successful. Funding an educational campaign can be expensive; however, the airport manager had already met with the business community and was assured that this group would contribute substantially to a well-designed campaign. This campaign relied in part on donations of advertising services and media time. In addition, the airport raised over \$100,000 to be spent on the campaign and obtained a \$600,000 Small Community Air Service Development Grant.

Not all communities will have the same level of local resources available, but the resources Latrobe mobilized not only helped make its local educational campaign more effective, but also served to impress potential carriers as to the level of local interest in their service.

Exhibit 4.10 provides a framework to identify resources and funding for the marketing program.



**Exhibit 4.10—Resource Worksheet for the Marketing Program.**

- 1) Funding Sources for first 12 months:

	Estimate	Constraints/Comments
Source #1:	\$	
Source #2:		
Source #3:		
Total		

- 2) Other potential funding sources:
- 3) Airport staff currently spend time on the following marketing activities:
- 4) Other groups and individuals are currently involved in airport marketing activities:
- 5) Individuals and organizations that could be available for airport marketing:

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

## 4.4 CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapter, your planning team drafted a set of goals and objectives. In this chapter, the team completed a SWOT analysis for the airport and estimated the funding and staff available and required to implement a marketing program. Each of these pieces of the analysis resulted in summary conclusions. It is now time to pull them together into a few succinct statements. Exhibit 4.11 provides the prompts.



**Exhibit 4.11—Airport Evaluation Conclusions Worksheet.**

- 1) The customer focus for the airport is:
- 2) The airport excels at:
- 3) The highest marketing priority is:
- 4) New opportunities that the airport wants to develop are:
- 5) Areas requiring further investigation are:

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

# CHAPTER 5

## AUDIENCE, MESSAGE, ACTIONS

- 5.1 Step 3—Revise Goals and Objectives
- 5.2 Step 4—Identify Target Audience, Message, and Actions
- 5.3 Target Audience
- 5.4 Message
- 5.5 Actions—Marketing Tactics

Every marketing campaign has a target audience, a message to deliver, and methods of communicating. There are many ways to communicate, but the target audience should be clear and the message crisp. This chapter brings these elements of your marketing plan into focus.



Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

Step 3 in the development of a marketing plan is to revisit the original goals and objectives prepared in Chapter 3 to ensure that they address your top marketing priorities and that they are consistent with the findings of the SWOT and attainable with the resources available. If necessary, revise them to be consistent. For example, if your original goal was to attract low cost carrier service, but your SWOT analysis shows that your catchment area is not large enough to support service with aircraft larger than a regional jet, you may need to revise your goal accordingly. Remember to review the objectives to make sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timed (SMART). If the goals and objectives need revision, now is the time to reformulate. The original goals and objectives worksheet provided in Exhibit 3.8 should be reviewed and revised to reflect what you have learned from the SWOT analysis.

## 5.2 STEP 4—IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCE, MESSAGE, AND ACTIONS

Step 4 in the development of the marketing plan involves (a) identifying the target audience and message and (b) deciding on the specific marketing actions to take. Each of these is described in the following sections.



Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

Identifying the target audience is important because small airports have limited resources and must effectively reach the right people. Identifying the right message is critical because without the right message, even the most precisely targeted campaign will not be effective.

Finally, the decisions regarding the range of actions to take to best communicate with your target audience are critical. This process of deciding what actions to take is often referred to as the development of marketing tactics. This chapter will provide additional guidance on that subject as well.

## 5.3 TARGET AUDIENCE

Selecting a specific target audience to address in your marketing program should be fairly straightforward. The target audience can be defined by geographic location (in the community or outside), demographics (age, income, or occupation), user groups (pilot, passenger, tenants, or prospects) or psychographic attributes (interests, attitudes, or opinions).

Sometimes target audiences are sequential. In the case of air service development, the most likely first target audience is the community and the most likely objectives are to raise awareness of and support for the air service. Once the community is on board, the second target audience is the air carrier and the objectives would change to retention, expansion, or addition of new air service. Exhibit 5.1 provides some examples of target audiences for airports. Within each group on the list, an airport might focus on a subset of the group as its target audience.

### Exhibit 5.1—Examples of Target Audiences.

- Local passengers
- Destination passengers
- Airlines
- Local businesses
- Transient pilots
- Aircraft owners with registered aircraft in the region
- Flight schools in the area
- Affiliates service centers of the local FBO

- Aviation specialists (e.g., maintenance & repair, helicopters, offshore oil rig support, aircraft painting)
- Existing tenants
- Tenant leads
- Schools and colleges
- Government groups
- Congressional delegation

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

## 5.1 MESSAGE

The marketing message engages the target audience and strives to influence choices. Marketing messages that airports deploy typically answer the questions: (1) Why should the target audience use the facility or service? (2) How is it better than the competition? and (3) What's in it for the customer?

Remember that the message is a direct communication with the target audience. So *"what's in it for the customer?" is much more important than a message that describes "what we do."*

To assist in developing the message, Exhibit 5.2 provides a set of prompts to address your target audience.



**Exhibit 5.2—Worksheet to Focus the Message for Each Target Audience.**

- 1) The marketing goal is . . .
- 2) The SMART objective here is . . .
- 3) The target audience is . . .
- 4) What service or facility are we marketing?
- 5) What benefits does it give to the target audience?
- 6) Why is it better than the competition?
- 7) What's in it for the customer to choose your airport?

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

The marketing message is critical to everything else you do in your marketing program. The message combined with an effective promotion can be very powerful. Small airports can develop their own marketing messages on their own with a little time and imagination. It is also another excellent task for the planning team.

*Make sure to pre-test the marketing messages to members of your target audience.*

## ST. CLOUD REGIONAL AIRPORT MARKETING MESSAGE EXAMPLE

St. Cloud, Minnesota, is located approximately 80 miles from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). The drive to MSP takes approximately 90 minutes, depending on traffic. St. Cloud has its own regional airport that offers a schedule of four daily frequencies to MSP. However, many air passengers elect to drive to MSP rather than start their trip from St. Cloud.



The Airport and the Air Service Advisory Committee undertook a marketing program with the principal goal to reduce passenger diversion to MSP. The target audience was air passengers driving to MSP. The message the campaign wanted to convey was converted into the tagline: **Fly Local, More Time, Less Stress, Free Parking.** Exhibit 5.3 below shows how the message was conveyed in a highway billboard.

**Exhibit 5.3—Billboard Used in St. Cloud Regional Airport Marketing Campaign.**



Source: St. Cloud Regional Airport 2006

## MESSAGE AND AIRPORT BRAND CONSISTENCY

Your marketing messages should be consistent with any airport identity or branding that is in place.

Generally speaking, “branding” is the process of creating a unique, positive, and recognizable identity for an organization. It is more than just the airport’s logo and tagline, although those are important items to have in any marketing campaign. The airport’s identity encompasses its larger mission including its values, its attitude about customer service, its products and services focus—in essence, how the airport portrays itself to the larger community it serves.

Not all agree that branding is appropriate in organizations with limited resources. However, the Internet and other forms of electronic communication have made some basic form of branding affordable for most organizations. When developing the airport’s identity, a good rule of thumb is to look at what the competition is doing. Do they have a website, a logo, a tag line or key message? Is their brand consistent across their marketing tools and materials? Does it reflect clearly the airport’s identity? Answers about the competition’s branding efforts and level of sophistication will help guide your airport as it establishes or refines its own identity, taking into account available resources and time for these efforts.

## 5.5 ACTIONS—MARKETING TACTICS

Your marketing program now has goals and objectives, a target audience and a message. The next step is to decide on the actions to take to best communicate with your target audience. This process of deciding what action to take is often referred to as tactics. Tactics are the actionable steps taken to implement a particular strategy and objective. In the discussion that follows, we describe different types of marketing tactics. However, in the real world, it is not important that you be able to classify your planning in terms of tactics. What is important is that you know what actions to take to accomplish your objectives.

### 5.5.1 TACTICS AND PROMOTION OPTIONS

This section presents two examples of how to move from goals and objectives to action. You will note that there can be multiple approaches to achieve the same objective. The purpose at this point is to consider a variety of options. As you construct your marketing plan, the options will be evaluated and the marketing mix established according to what you think will work best and is within your resource budget of time and money.

#### EXAMPLE #1—TACTICS/ACTIONABLE STEPS TO INCREASE PASSENGERS

---

Exhibit 5.4 illustrates the process:

1. Set the goal.
2. Establish the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed) objective.
3. Identify the actions you will take to achieve the objective.

In this example, the goal is to expand the use of the airport. The SMART Objective is to increase the number of passengers by “X” percent. There are two groups of actions the planning team is considering. One is to increase the number of passengers by improving customer service at the airport; the other it to raise airport awareness in the community. Within each approach there are a variety of options. The airport could improve customer service by providing the following:

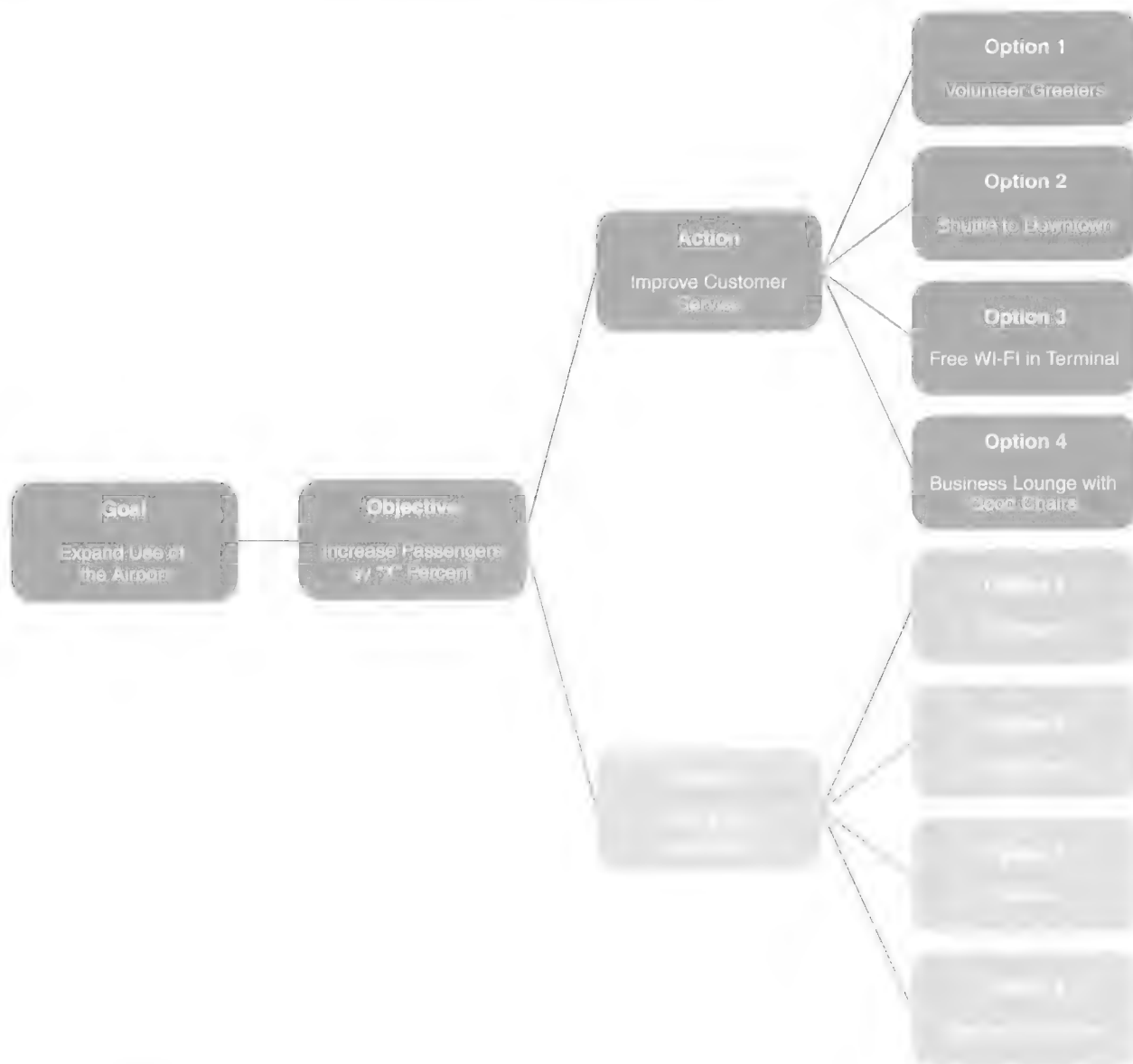
1. Volunteer greeters to welcome and help arrivals
2. Free Wi-Fi in the terminal
3. A shuttle service from the airport to downtown
4. A business lounge with good chairs

Alternatively, the airport could raise awareness of the service and benefits of using the local airport. There are a variety of airport awareness activities, for example:

1. Advertise on highway billboards
2. “Pitch” the airport to the local chamber of commerce and its members
3. Work with the airlines to communicate with local frequent flyers
4. Run promotions or contests in the community that encourage passengers to use the local airport
5. Promote the airport by improving the airport website

In this first year, the marketing program could focus on raising airport awareness or it could pursue both airport awareness and customer service and select a few specific marketing activities to undertake. The general purpose of the diagram is to group and visualize the options.

**Exhibit 5.4—Action Diagram to Increase Number of Passengers.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and Oliver Wyman

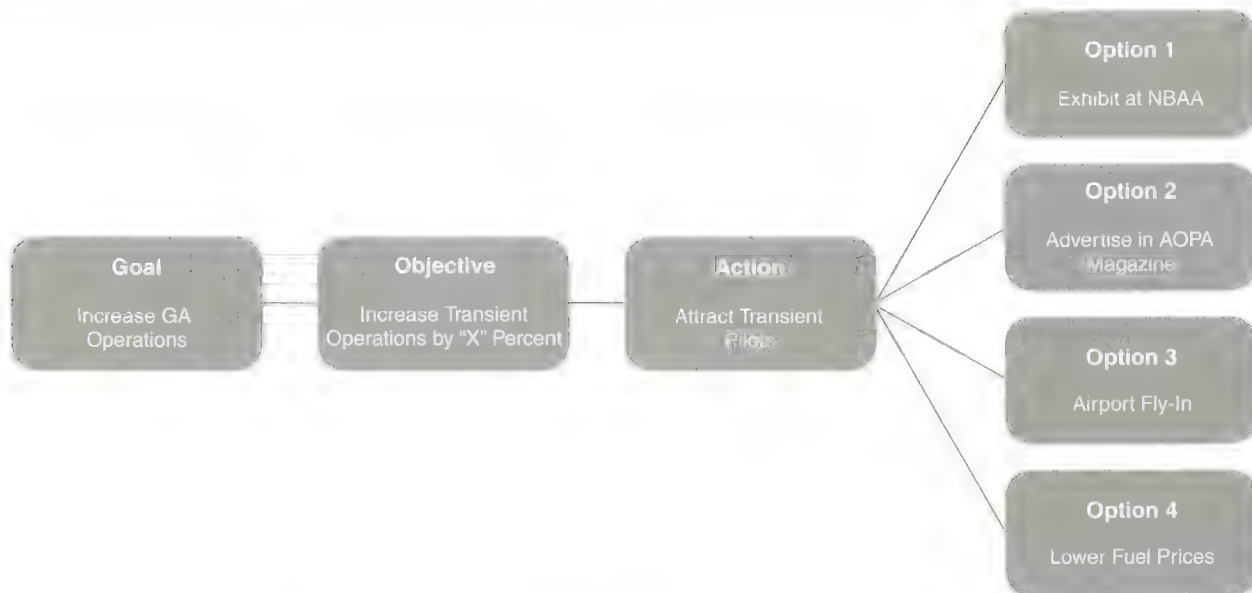
## EXAMPLE #2—TACTICS/ACTIONABLE STEPS TO ATTRACT NEW TRANSIENT PILOTS

The second example has a goal to increase general aviation operations and an objective of increasing transient operations by "X" percent. Actions to attract transient pilots include the following:

1. Promote the airport by attending the NBAA national convention
2. Advertise in the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association's (AOPA's) magazine
3. Have an airport open house or fly-in
4. Lower fuel prices

Just as with the first example, there are many action options to consider and evaluate (see Exhibit 5.5).

**Exhibit 5.5—Action Diagram to Attract Transient Pilots.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and Oliver Wyman

# CHAPTER 6

## MARKETING TOOLS

- 6.1 Step 5—Selecting Marketing Tools
- 6.2 Cost of Different Tools
- 6.3 Tools Airports Use Today
- 6.4 Tools Airports Consider Most Effective
- 6.5 Cost and Effectiveness Matrix
- 6.6 Essential Marketing Tools for All Airports

### 6.1 STEP 5—SELECTING MARKETING TOOLS

Step 5 in creating a marketing plan (the last planning step) is to select the right marketing tools. Small airports use a wide range of marketing tools depending on the subject, the audience they are trying to reach, their budget, and other factors. This chapter introduces the basic categories of marketing tools and describes the tools airports use most frequently and consider most effective. This chapter also describes the essential tools that every airport should have.



Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

### 6.2 COST OF DIFFERENT TOOLS

Because many small airports operate with very limited marketing budgets, one of the major challenges they face is how to achieve the most marketing impact with the least budget. Exhibit 6.1 introduces this subject by ranking the basic marketing and promotional tools on the basis of cost. Actual costs are not provided because they vary widely by metropolitan area. Not only television and radio ads, but also billboards and other forms of advertising cost far more in major cities than in smaller communities. Nevertheless, in all markets, there is a general hierarchy of costs that airport managers should consider in selecting media.

**Exhibit 6.1—Relative Cost of Marketing Tools.**

Cost of Marketing Tools →			
Least Cost	Low	Medium	High
Press Releases Editorials Travel Related Articles E-Mail Newsletter Chamber Speeches Networking Testimonials	Website Promotions (e.g., free tickets, gifts) Receptions Open House	Radio Newspaper Ads Billboards	TV Ads

Source: Oliver Wyman

Fortunately, the marketing tools that small airports use most frequently and find most effective are also the tools that cost least.

The top three marketing tools for small airports are the airport website, newspaper articles, and press releases.

Only the website has an associated investment and it can be a very modest one in terms of the cost to set up the website.

It is worth pointing out that the small airports that are the most effective at marketing seem to market continuously. Even with limited budgets, they are in the public's view with great regularity. A low cost technique that is used by many of these airports is networking. Managers of these airports take every opportunity to meet with business leaders, community groups, news people, public officials, airlines, tenants and potential tenants, developers, industry groups, and a host of other individuals and organizations. Through this relentless networking, these airport managers succeed in getting out their message. Since much of this networking is either free or low cost, the importance of networking cannot be overstated.

### 6.3 TOOLS AIRPORTS USE TODAY

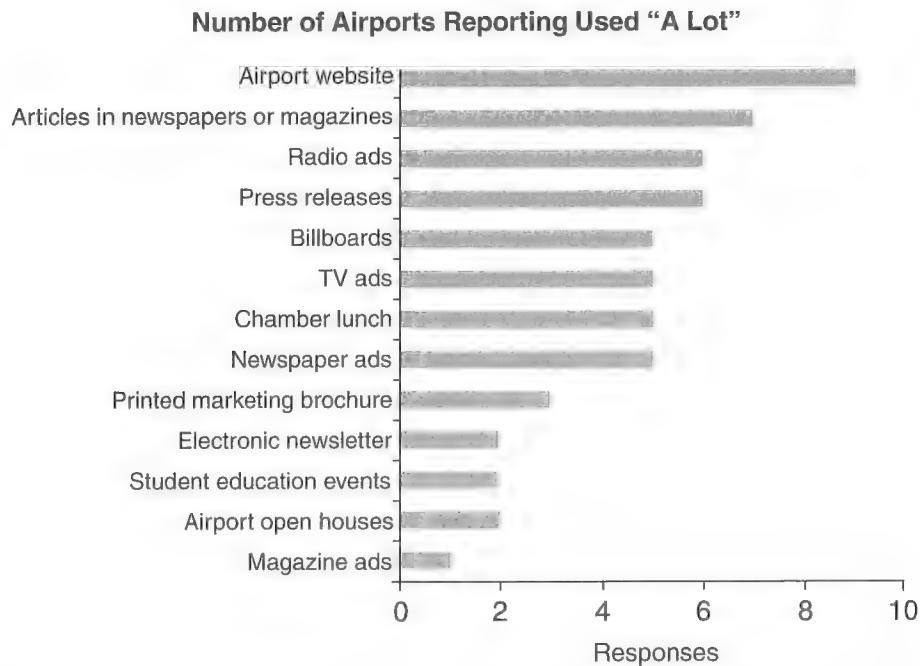
In deciding what marketing tools to use, it is helpful to know what tools other airports are already using. Based on the interviews conducted with managers of small commercial service airports and general aviation airports, all airports rely heavily on three top tools—the airport website, newspaper articles, and press releases. Beyond these “top three” tools, airports use a wide range of other marketing tools. There are some differences, although not major ones, between the tools used most frequently by commercial service airports and those used by general aviation airports.

#### COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS

Nearly all commercial service airports reported making the most use of their website. This was followed by the use of articles in newspapers and magazines, and then press releases and radio ads.

Newspaper advertisements, chamber lunches, TV advertisements, and billboards were also used by nearly one-half of the commercial service airports. In contrast, very few commercial service airports relied on airport open houses, student education events, electronic newsletters, or magazine ads—although all these techniques were used to some extent. Exhibit 6.2 shows the tools used most by commercial service airports.



**Exhibit 6.2—Marketing Tools Used Frequently by Commercial Service Airports.**

Source: Airport Marketing Survey, June 2008

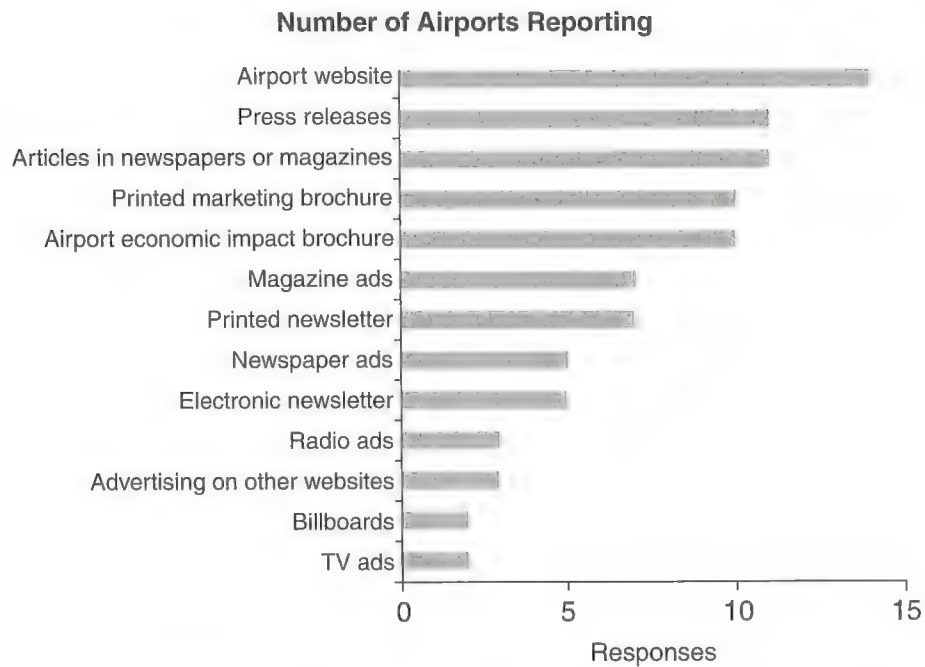
Airports differed in their views regarding the usefulness of market research. Some airports, both large and small, conducted customer satisfaction and travel destination surveys. Others said they regarded market research as useful, but did not have the budget for it. Still others said that they did not need to conduct market research because they knew the issues.

### GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

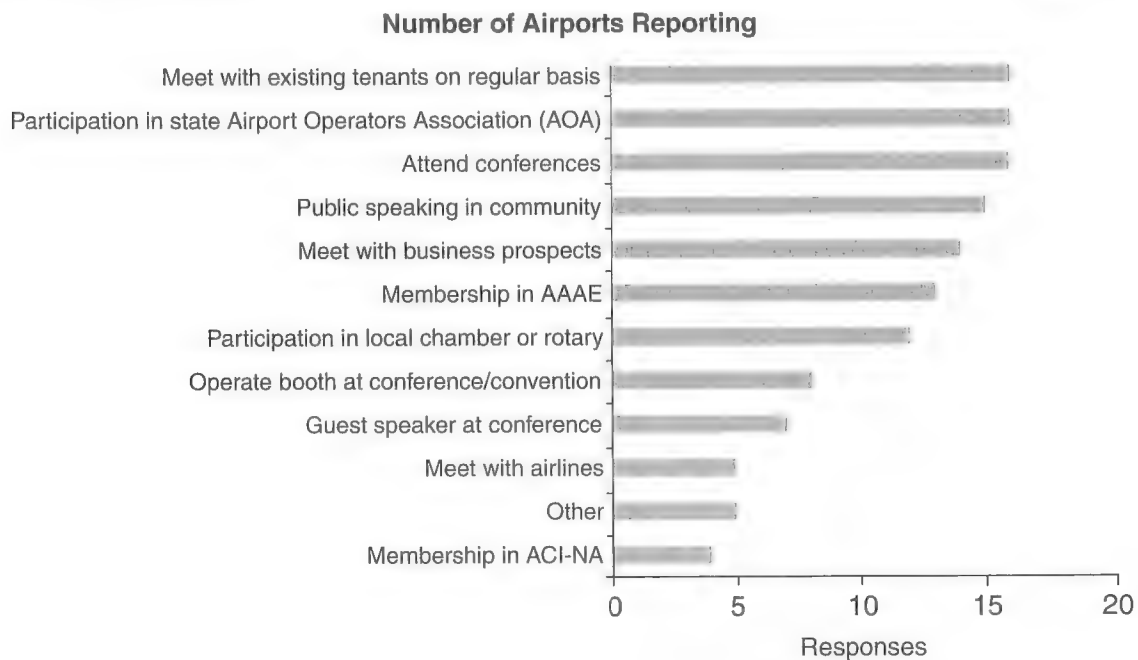
As shown in Exhibit 6.3, the most popular marketing tools among general aviation airport managers are the same top three tools—the airport website, press releases, and articles in newspapers and magazines. More so than commercial service airports, general aviation airports minimize the use of the more expensive marketing tools and instead rely on a variety of low cost marketing tools.

General aviation airports make use of economic impact brochures, printed marketing brochures, and printed newsletters to a greater extent than do commercial service airports. And they make much less use of the more expensive marketing tools—television, radio, and billboards.

Although both general aviation and commercial service airports engage in substantial networking activities, general aviation airports focus more heavily on this form of promotion than do commercial service airports. Most general aviation airports reported multiple ways in which they networked on a regular basis (see Exhibit 6.4).

**Exhibit 6.3—Marketing Tools Used “A Lot” or “Somewhat” by General Aviation Airports.**

Source: Airport Marketing Survey, June 2008

**Exhibit 6.4—Networking Activities Used by General Aviation Airports.**

Source: Airport Manager Survey, June 2008

General aviation airports also place somewhat greater emphasis on sponsoring educational events or other events at the airport to raise public awareness and improve the airport's image in the community. The specific type of sponsored event varied among those surveyed, but included such activities as Young Eagles, student tours of the airport, and safety seminars. Some of the less common but creative promotional events included partnering for charity events, chamber of commerce "After Hours" events, and the local symphony.

A customer satisfaction survey is the most common form of market research conducted by general aviation airports, but only 6 of the 16 respondents reported conducting such a survey. Also, those airports seeking commercial service have typically used outside consultants to conduct market research for the airport.

## 6.1 TOOLS AIRPORTS CONSIDER MOST EFFECTIVE

Airports generally agree that local press coverage is an effective marketing tool, as are meetings with local business and civic groups. Airports know that good media relations are important and that issuing good press releases in turn leads to good radio and TV coverage. One airport manager said that he helped build good media relations by always having a story ready for when the local media needed one.

Beyond the subject of obtaining good local press coverage, there is a range of opinion as to which tools are most effective.

### COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS

Commercial service airports reported the following:

- Several airports were strong proponents of using billboards to increase awareness of the local airport. "You could be there now" was a common theme.
- Several airports reported that they had conducted contests that were effective. These made use of radio, email, and Internet. One airport used a contest involving local travel agencies to encourage them to book travel at the local airport.
- Four respondents mentioned that they found newspaper advertising to be the least effective marketing medium.
- Radio elicited differing reactions. Some airports rated it among the least effective marketing vehicles. Others thought it useful for short-term impacts.
- Air shows drew mixed reactions. Many airports had sponsored air shows in the past, but in some cases, found them disruptive to operations. Many airports also conducted programs for students, the 4-H, Girl Scouts, or Boy Scouts.
- Two airports said that it was difficult to know which media were effective. One said that the airlines had the direct relationship with the customer and that the airport was only an intermediary with much less information.

## GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

General aviation airport managers found their airport website to be an effective way to keep tenants, business prospects, and other users of the airport informed and aware of current services and activities. They stressed that it is important to keep the website up-to-date, and to have a dedicated resource for this function. Several airports direct all their advertising back to their webpage. This saves time on the telephone with reporters and users who want general airport information.

They ranked press releases and newspaper articles to be the most effective marketing tool, followed by either an economic impact brochure or airport specific marketing brochure. They also found different forms of networking to be effective. It is important to note that many of the respondents have used resources at the local college or university to complete an economic impact study on behalf of the airport.

Airport managers surveyed felt very strongly, either pro or con, about the effectiveness of airport open houses or air shows. Some felt they were not effective at all and were very time consuming for a limited staff to manage, while others felt they were very effective and a great way to showcase the airport. The ability to muster volunteers to help manage the event was a key ingredient for a successful outcome. There were a range of other responses to this question, but little consensus.

### 6.5 COST AND EFFECTIVENESS MATRIX

The matrix in Exhibit 6.5 shows how the major marketing tools rank in terms of cost and effectiveness—with the least costly tools beginning at the top of the matrix. In addition, some tools are marked as essential. Each of the tools is described in subsequent chapters. (See Exhibit 9.1 for an alphabetical listing of tools with page references.)

Important caveats to the use of the matrix are as follows:

- The cost of individual tools varies depending on the metropolitan area in which the tool is employed and other factors.
- There are differences of opinion as to the effectiveness of each tool.
- The circumstances of each situation will determine whether a particular tool is appropriate regardless of any overall “rating” of that tool. The matrix attempts to cover some of these issues, but is nevertheless a simplified look at the range of marketing tools.

**Exhibit 6.5—Marketing Tools: Cost and Effectiveness Matrix.**

Marketing Tools	Essential Tool	Cost	Effectiveness		Page
			Commercial Service	General Aviation	
Articles - Newspaper, Magazine	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	75
Awards & Special Recognitions		\$	●	●	76
Board Participation - Non-Profit Organizations		\$	●	●	89
Contact Managers		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	130
Customer Satisfaction Surveys		\$	●	●	90
Earned Media	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	70
Interviews (Radio and TV)	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	76
Networking - Business, Civic, Non-Profit Groups	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	119
Networking - Professional & Industry Organizations		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	122
Networking - Strategic Partnerships		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	127
Networking - Tradeshow & Conferences		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	123
Newsletter - Electronic		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	90
Press Coverage - Newspaper, TV, Radio	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	70
Press Kit	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	72
Press Releases	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	73
Public Service Announcement		\$	●	●	76
Public Speaking	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	78
Speeches - Chambers and Business Associations	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	79
Speeches - Dedications & Community Events		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	79
Testimonials		\$	● ●	● ●	91
Volunteering		\$	●	●	89
Advertising - Internet		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	110
Advertising - Trade Journals		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	94
Banners, flags, awnings		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	104
Marketing Brochure		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	96
Signage - Banners, Displays		\$ - \$\$\$	● ●	● ●	101
White Papers		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	92
Advertising - Magazine		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	94
Advertising - Newspaper		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	●	94
Contests & Drawings		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	84
Educational Programs		\$ - \$\$\$	●	● ● ●	82
Free Services & Amenities		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	85
Giveaways		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	85
Lobbying		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	130
Open Houses		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	○	81
Promotions		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	83
Rates & Charges Reductions		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	86
Sponsoring Community Events		\$ - \$\$\$	● ●	● ●	88
Website	★	\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	110
Advertising - Radio		\$	○	●	108
Digital Video		\$	● ●	● ●	109
Newsletter - Print		\$	● ●	● ● ●	90
Sponsoring Interns & Students		\$	●	● ●	87
Advertising - Billboards		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	●	102
Advertising - Direct Mail		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	96
Advertising - Other Outdoor (Buses, etc.)		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	103
Direct Mail		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	96
Economic Impact Studies		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ●	90
Outdoor Advertising - Other		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ● ●	●	101
Advertising - TV		\$	● ● ●	●	108
Air Shows		\$	○	○	81

**Key**

Costs      \$ - \$\$\$

Effectiveness      ● ● ● ●

Divided Opinions on Effectiveness      ○

Source: Oliver Wyman

## 6.6 ESSENTIAL MARKETING TOOLS FOR ALL AIRPORTS

All airports should have a marketing toolbox before they even consider conducting specific marketing programs. The required items are basic, some are not even commonly thought of as marketing tools, and most airports already have them. They include the following:

- **Press Kit.** The Press Kit is a vital tool that supports all earned media activities. It usually takes the form of a folder that contains pertinent information about the airport. Press Kits also appear on airport websites. Several airports interviewed for this research reported that having a Press Kit and a photo library saved the airport manager time because when reporters contacted the airport for information they were following up on basic information already found on the website.

A Press Kit typically includes the following:

- A website or physical cover with the airport's brand (logo, key message, graphics, and colors)
- Information for media inquiries
  - Office hours
  - Phone numbers
  - How to request an interview
  - Parking and "live broadcast trucks"
  - Airport access
- Fact sheet about the airport
- Image library (photos of the airport)
- Airport newsletter
- News releases
- Staff biographies
- Members of the airport governing group (airport commission or authority)
- Airport tenants and businesses
- Airport statistics
- Airport financial records
- Business cards and stationery that carry the airport's brand are used in the Press Kit

If the Press Kit is online, it might also include a copy of the most recent master plan and descriptions/visuals about current airport capital projects.

- **Website.** Websites vary greatly, but may be thought of in two ways: (1) as a brochure or (2) as a content-driven marketing tool. The simplest form of website—the brochure type website—is like an extended business card containing basic information about the airport, its facilities, location, purpose, and contact information. Every airport should have at least this type of presence on the Internet (see Chapter 11 for more information on websites).

The following activities make use of the above referenced tools and are essential for every airport:

**Earned Media**—refers to press releases, interviews, networking, and other activities for free media coverage

**Networking**—means establishing relationships in the community among business, civic, and non-profit groups to build awareness and support for the airport

**Public Speaking**—refers to speeches at chambers of commerce, business associations, and other events to tell the airport story

These activities are described in detail in Chapters 9 through 12.



# CHAPTER 7

## CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING PLAN

- 7.1 Core Components of a Marketing Plan
- 7.2 Action Plan
- 7.3 Characteristics of an Effective Marketing Plan
- 7.4 Putting the Principles to Work—Community Support Case Study
- 7.5 Importance of a Powerful Executive Summary

What are the essential elements of a marketing plan? The marketing plan is the vehicle to accomplish the airport's goals. It is a framework that defines the specific tasks, schedule, resources, and budgets that, when implemented, result in the achievement of the airport's marketing goals.

With the airport assessment, goals and objectives, a target audience, a message, specific actions, and tools, it is time to put together the marketing plan.

### 7.1 CORE COMPONENTS OF A MARKETING PLAN

Marketing plans vary significantly in content, format, and length. However, most marketing plans cover the following core components:

**The Airport's Current Position.** An overview of the airport's identity, a basic description of products and services offered, major airport users and tenants, level of airport activity, competitive position in the region, and a forward looking discussion of trends in the particular sectors of aviation that the airport serves.

**Airport Goals and Objectives.** A discussion of the goals, target audiences of the marketing plan, the message to be communicated, and measurable objectives the airport intends to achieve within a specific timeframe.

**Action Plan.** The specific marketing activities that will be undertaken to achieve each objective. In addition, the action plan includes a description of individual tasks, assignments of personnel or volunteers, schedules, and budgets.

**Management and Monitoring.** A plan to oversee the progress of the marketing campaign, monitor progress, and fine tune the marketing plan as needed.

The marketing plan serves two important functions:

- It is the roadmap that converts the airport marketing goals into specific activities.
- It is a reference document for all participants in the airport's marketing campaign that provides background information, a plan of action, and measurable outcomes.

Once written, a marketing plan should be updated on a regular basis to reflect achievements and modifications to the action plan.

## 7.2 ACTION PLAN

The action plan describes the specific marketing activities that the airport is seeking to accomplish. Action plans should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Depending on resources available, it is a good idea to start with one or two marketing goals and three or four primary activities to establish the program. Exhibit 7.1 recaps how to design an action plan.

### Exhibit 7.1—Steps to Assemble an Action Plan.

Step 1. Prioritize and select goals and objectives to achieve this year.

Step 2. Target the audience and formulate the message.

Step 3. Choose the activities that will best communicate the message.

Step 4. Estimate the resources required for each activity and the source of those resources. (This includes people and money.) This step will help match activities with available resources.

Step 5. Plan each activity. Prepare a list of specific tasks associated with each activity, the person or persons responsible, dates of completion, budget for the activity.

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

A spreadsheet is an excellent tool to help with the scoping of each activity. Once the activities are planned, create a summary sheet of the activities, schedules, and budget. Chapter 13 contains worksheets to assist with evaluating specific marketing activities, scheduling tasks, and making a budget.

### 7.2.1 EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES CHOSEN

The following two examples are activities chosen by small airports as part of their action plans.

#### ST. CLOUD REGIONAL AIRPORT MARKETING CAMPAIGN

St. Cloud, Minnesota, was a recipient of a Small Community Air Service Development grant. With these funds, a marketing program was constructed that included a revenue guarantee for an additional daily frequency to MSP. Implementation of the local marketing campaign included the following activities:

- Permanent billboards located on Interstate 94 featuring well known local business leaders choosing to fly from St. Cloud.
- Rotating posters similar to the billboards located in downtown St. Cloud and directed at walking traffic.
- Radio ads that featured first-person testimonials about using St. Cloud Regional Airport (STC).
- Print ads in the local newspaper announcing the additional frequency and competitive fares.
- Luggage tag giveaways.

Each of the marketing activities required separate planning, a budget, and coordination. St. Cloud hired a consultant to serve as the temporary creative director. The consultant was responsible for the design, production, and placement of each form of advertising. The airport required separate bids for each activity and the consultant was able to negotiate very competitive rates for billboards, posters, print media, and radio ads. The campaign lasted approximately 8 months and resulted in increased enplanements at STC.

## PUEBLO AIRPORT'S CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT NEW AVIATION TENANTS

---

Pueblo Memorial Airport (PUB) is located in Colorado, 110 miles south of Denver on Interstate 25. The corridor that spans from Ft. Collins-Loveland to the north down through Denver and Colorado Springs to Pueblo is known as Colorado's Front Range and has experienced both population and employment growth. The airport owns 2,308 acres of land reserved for aeronautical purposes and has an adjacent industrial park consisting of approximately 1,475 acres subdivided into 75 parcels. Pueblo Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO) offers extensive incentives for businesses that add jobs to the community. As a former military base, PUB has a long runway (10,496 by 150 feet), a control tower, and ILS on both ends of the runway. The airport's principal marketing goal was to attract new aviation business. Because it wanted to gain exposure to a national audience, its target market was vendors and visitors at the NBAA convention. They crafted a message: "Clear skies over Pueblo Airport; taking your business to new heights." The tagline was developed to remind prospects that air space was free of congestion over PUB and the airport is pro-business (i.e., willing to assist new businesses to locate at the airport).

The airport, local chamber of commerce, and FBO committed to a multi-year presence at NBAA to establish identity and national visibility for PUB. The following activities were selected as effective means to contact its audience:

- Operate a booth at NBAA annually.
- Send invitations to registered attendees and exhibitors to visit the Pueblo booth.
- Give away Pueblo Salsa and airport promotional brochures to invited and walk-up traffic.
- Create a list of contacts to meet at the convention, assign team members, set up appointments to visit with specific contacts.
- Capture contact information and follow-up after the convention.

The Pueblo program is a concentrated marketing effort. At NBAA, the airport and the FBO also have the opportunity to talk with pilots and pitch using PUB as a stopover point. The City of Pueblo, the chamber of commerce, and the FBO all contribute to the cost of the booth, promotional materials, and travel.

### 7.2.2 SELECTING ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR AIRPORT

In selecting specific marketing activities for your airport, it is useful to ask yourself about the resources needed to accomplish each activity, as well as whether there is evidence that the activity will likely to be effective. Exhibit 7.2 provides a set of questions to evaluate specific marketing activities.

#### Exhibit 7.2—Evaluation Questions for Proposed Marketing Activities.

---

- Is the activity currently done by the airport today and has it been effective?
- How will the current activity contribute to achievement of the marketing objective?
- Can the activity be undertaken in the timeframe needed?
- How much will it cost to complete the activity?
- Are there enough internal resources to undertake the activity, both people and money?
- Do the airport manager and staff have the capability and time to complete the task, or are technical experts such as graphic designers or computer experts required?
- Can those experts be found in the local community?
- Are there obstacles that need to be overcome?
- Are there solutions for overcoming those obstacles?
- Is it a high priority activity or one that could be scheduled for a later date?

### 7.2.3 STEPS TO IMPLEMENT EACH ACTIVITY

Once the airport has decided on which activities to pursue, the next step is to break out those activities into specific tasks, that is, what needs to be done from start to finish, persons responsible, schedule, and budget. Since most airports undertake multiple marketing activities, there should be a separate section of the marketing plan devoted to each activity. Each section would cover the following:

1. **Tasks.** These are all the steps needed to complete the activity. Typically, the tasks laid out in the action plan should follow a logical sequence, listing those that need to be completed first, second, third, and so on.
2. **Persons Responsible for Completing the Task.** Making assignments and communicating expectations will improve the odds of completing the activity on time and on budget.
3. **Due Dates.** The most important date to determine is the targeted completion date for the entire activity and then work backward to fill in due dates for each preceding task. In that manner, the airport manager will be able to determine the full-time commitment required for the activity. When working on a complex activity, sometimes due dates slip for a variety of reasons. Hence, the action plan provides separate columns for revisions to dates to provide clear visibility of date "slippage." It is slippage that can mean the difference between successfully accomplishing the activity and meeting the airport's marketing objective.
4. **Budget.** This is an estimate of what it will cost to complete the activity. Sometimes the budget is a best guess, other times the cost is both fixed and easy to obtain. If the airport has a fixed total budget, the marketing activities are defined by the available total budget.
5. **Notes.** Use this area to list any important notes or comments about the action plan, including assumptions and questions to be resolved or clarified.

Exhibit 7.3 presents an example of how an activity can be planned. Spreadsheets are effective ways to describe, maintain, and communicate components of the marketing plan. A worksheet can be set up using software tools such as Microsoft® Excel or Microsoft® Project so that modifications and updates to an activity can be easily accomplished and sent electronically to members of the marketing team. Spreadsheets also make it easy to summarize or sort by person, schedule, and budget.

**Exhibit 7.3—Planning a Marketing Activity.**

MARKETING GOAL: Increase Transient Pilot Activity at the Airport  
 MARKETING ACTIVITY: Advertise in Pilot Magazine

DATE: (Today's Date)  
 VERSION: (for subsequent revisions, as needed)

I.D. #	Task	Person Assigned to Task	Start Date	Due Date	Revised Start Date	Revised Due Date	Budget	Notes
1	Obtain list of possible publications including cost estimates	Administrative Assistant or PR Consultant		6/1				Readership, cost to advertise, frequency of publication
2	Review list and decide on placement	Airport Manager		6/2				
3	Meet with graphic artist re: design of ad, key message, look, and feel	Airport Manager & Graphic Artist		6/5				Need to get graphic artist JPEG file of airport logo and tagline
4	Create ad	Graphic Artist	6/5	6/10			\$ 500	
5	Review and revise ad content	Airport Manager		6/11				
6	Ad final copy	Graphic Artist	6/12	6/15				
7	Ad placement	Airport Manager & Administrative Assistant		7/1, 8/1, 9/1			\$1,500	July, August, and September issues
8	Assess results	Airport Manager	10/19	10/30				Need to determine ways to evaluate if ad is effective.
9	Ad "next steps"	Airport Manager						Renew, change content/publication, or stop ad
<b>TOTAL ACTIVITY</b>							<b>\$2,000</b>	

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

remind local passengers of the overall benefits of local air service. The message conveyed is that when all costs are considered, the local air service is a bargain.

Community awareness programs strive to emphasize the following points:

- To keep local air service, you must use it.
- Always check local airfares first before considering alternate airports.
- If the local airport has a high fare reputation, the community must deal with it directly. This means highlighting low fares that are available locally and also highlighting the other costs involved in driving to a distant airport (including mileage, parking, and wasted time).
- Focus on the passengers who are driving to other airports.

These messages can be highlighted through campaigns in the local press and through various other publicity channels.

### 7.4.3 TARGET THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The involvement of the business community is important both in aiding general community awareness programs and in helping to shift business travel to the local airport. From an air service development perspective, the involvement of the business community is crucial for several reasons:

1. First, business travelers generate a disproportionate amount of revenue and pay higher ticket prices than leisure travelers. In fact, the typical business traveler pays more than twice as much per ticket as the typical leisure traveler. Unlike airports, which focus on enplanement volume as their primary measure of success, airlines focus on revenue. Thus, “high revenue” passengers are the most important to the airlines. The more of these passengers an airport can attract, the greater the chance for improved service.
2. Second, business leaders have the ability to shift business travel spending within their own companies and to influence other business leaders to do the same. This is much more difficult to accomplish with leisure travel.
3. Third, business and civic organizations are able to provide funding for marketing support and other initiatives that go beyond the levels available from other sources and is not subject to the same spending restrictions. For example, the business community can designate funding to be provided to support a particular carrier’s air service without concern for violating FAA rules regarding nondiscrimination.
4. Fourth, funding provided by local businesses for marketing support means more to airline decision makers than does equal funding provided from other sources. When local businesses contribute money to attract or retain air service, it signals the importance of that service to the airlines’ most important customers. A government grant for the same amount does not serve to send the same signal to the airlines.

For these same reasons, a respected business leader is often the community’s most effective advocate in dealing with air service issues. An effective business leader is able to serve as a catalyst for change, to take ownership of the issue to make commitments on behalf of the business community, and to fulfill them. The business leader is likely to understand the airline’s need for revenue. He or she also represents the airlines’ most important customers, speaks the language of business, and has the ability to motivate other business leaders to take concrete action.

#### 7.4.4 EXAMPLE—HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA, ENGAGES THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

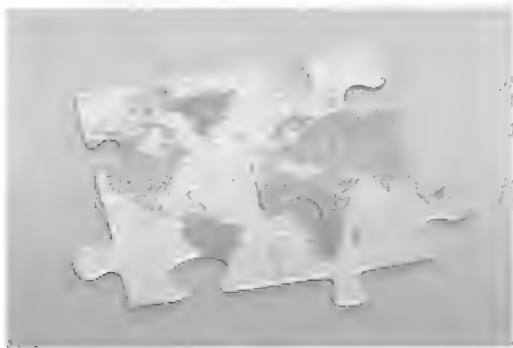
One example of an awareness program focused on the business community comes from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. There, the airport persuaded a major carrier to reduce fares and then heavily marketed the lower fares by

- Conducting press conferences,
- Hosting dinners aimed at travel agents, and
- Buying billboard, radio, and other advertisements in the regional media.

The campaign not only highlighted the availability of lower fares, but also stressed that the business community would either “use or lose” those fares. The message was that the program would succeed only if travelers supported the local airport (see Exhibit 7.5).

Every airport engaged in marketing campaigns to reduce diversion can look at Harrisburg’s experience and then customize a message to speak directly to its local audience.

#### Exhibit 7.5—Example of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania’s Website Campaign to Engage the Business Community.



*The Antidote to the Big Airport*

*“South Central Pennsylvania is the fastest growing region in PA and is an emerging player on the international stage. By working together the HIA (Harrisburg International Airport) Travel Network can help realize the tremendous potential of this region.*

*Record high gas prices, pending mergers and bankruptcies are leading to air service cutbacks at cities throughout the country. With your help by continuing to purchase tickets on the airlines flying to and from we can encourage these airlines to maintain the levels of service we have today and grow levels of service to and from our region in the future!”*

Harrisburg International Airport

Source: Harrisburg International Airport

#### 7.5 IMPORTANCE OF A POWERFUL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every marketing plan should also have a powerful executive summary. A good executive summary keeps everyone on track and motivated. The summary should be a persuasive call to action and a power advertisement for the airport’s marketing program.

The executive summary should be treated as a dynamic document. Revise it as needed. As the airport enters a new phase of the marketing campaign, add a summary of what was accomplished in the last period and how this new phase of activity is different.



# CHAPTER 8

## EXECUTE, MONITOR, AND EVALUATE THE PLAN

- 8.1 Step 6—Execute the Plan
- 8.2 Step 7—Monitor and Evaluate the Plan
- 8.3 Modify Your Marketing Plan
- 8.4 Funding Sources

Previous chapters provide a framework to build a marketing plan. In Step 6, it is time to execute the plan, which requires focused management. In Step 7, it is important to monitor and evaluate the results, and make mid-course adjustments if necessary. This chapter also includes a closer look at possible funding sources for marketing,



Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

### 8.1 STEP 6—EXECUTE THE PLAN

The value of the marketing plan ultimately is in its implementation. One person needs to be in charge to manage the program and make sure that roles and responsibilities are clear and that schedules and budgets are understood. The management duties include the following:

- Communication with the marketing team, the airport's governing entity, and other stakeholders
- Assignment of roles and responsibilities to staff, volunteers, and other participating organizations
- Milestones to gauge progress of the SMART objectives
- Review

Although it is possible to write much more about executing the plan, the fact is that managing a marketing program is just like managing many other multi-phased projects that airport managers have experience doing.

## 11.2 STEP 7—MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE PLAN



Source: GMH Consulting, LLC

After the marketing campaign is launched, it may be tempting to think that the work is done. However, the campaign must be monitored. Here are some examples of work that must be done:

- Advertisements that are placed should be checked to make sure they ran as scheduled and in the form submitted.
- Where earned media is involved, there should be follow-up with local media to inquire about the status of news articles.
- Help-yourself brochures should be stocked and re-supplied.

Everyone involved in the project should be tasked with monitoring the effectiveness of different aspects of the campaign.

Ideally, it would be useful to have on-going information on the impact of the campaign in the same way that presidential candidates have on-going polling information. For small airports, of course, that level of monitoring is not possible. Instead, they must rely on anecdotal evidence.

- In the case of chamber presentations, what was the audience reaction?
- In the case of newspaper articles, what do people think about them?
- What marketing materials are people talking about?
- What changes are there in passenger demand?
- What changes are there in call volume?
- What new questions are being asked about the airport?

One key source of information is the passengers passing through the terminal. The airport director has an ideal opportunity to talk with passengers and to get some direct feedback on the campaign. Perhaps the most difficult part of this process is determining whether passengers are providing an honest reaction or simply telling the director what they think he or she wants to hear. But in any event, the passengers are in effect a captive audience and the director should take the opportunity to speak with them.

Where particular media appears to be ineffective, it should be discontinued and resources shifted to media that appear to be more effective.

Marketing campaigns are on-going. They should be well-planned, and then they must be carefully monitored and adjusted as needed based on the results observed.

## 8.2.1 MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

It is often a challenge to develop accurate measures of marketing efforts. This section describes some of the measures commonly used to determine the effectiveness of small airport marketing programs as well as the issues associated with these measures.

### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

---

About half of the small commercial service airports interviewed said that they had conducted customer satisfaction surveys at some point. Typically, these surveys are conducted by pollsters who interview passengers while they are waiting to board flights at the local airport. In other cases, these surveys are conducted via email using the email lists airports have assembled from newsletter, website, or contest signups. Free or low cost Internet survey services make the process quick and easy for the survey taker.

Customer satisfaction surveys are effective in measuring the level of satisfaction of current airport users and their opinion of the facilities, services, and accessibility of the airport.

### AWARENESS AND USAGE SURVEYS

---

A broad range of telephone, mail, and Internet surveys have been taken to provide measurements of the following:

- Whether residents are aware of the services offered by the local airport
- Whether residents consider using the local airport when they make air travel decisions
- What price differences would be acceptable for residents considering flying from the local airport versus driving to larger airports
- Whether residents believe the airport is a good neighbor and strong community asset
- Whether residents think it is important to have scheduled air service at the local airport

In theory, a survey of population in the small airport's catchment area has strong potential to measure the effectiveness of the airport's marketing efforts. In practice, however, the cost of conducting a telephone survey using a professional survey firm is prohibitive for many small airports. Other methods of surveying, such as mail surveys or Internet surveys, do not always generate a sufficient response rate.

What this means is that this type of survey may still be a good idea if it can be conducted inexpensively. However, the results of an airport-conducted Internet or mail survey are likely to be descriptive as opposed to statistically valid.

### FOCUS GROUPS

---

Although focus groups cannot provide statistically valid information, they can provide in-depth insights into opinions about the local airport, how travelers make airport choices, and the effectiveness of marketing programs. There will be a cost to conduct focus group interviews if a facilitator is employed. However, the insight provided may be a good substitute for expensive telephone surveys.

## OTHER NON-SURVEY MEASURES

---

A variety of statistical information is available about airport usage. The information is collected and distributed in raw form by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and is typically purchased through one of a number of vendors. In some cases, the state DOTs may have access to this data, which it then makes available to small airports within the particular state.

The available U.S. DOT data (which includes the Origin and Destination Survey and the T-100 data) permits airports to measure changes in passengers and airfares at their airport. The information is available not only for the airport as a whole but for individual routes at the airport. Using this data, small airports can rank the top destinations for local passengers and can measure changes in passenger numbers and airfares to those destinations.

By comparing local statistics with the statistics for nearby competing airports, it is also possible for airport managers to judge whether passenger diversion is getting worse or better. A number of other analyses can be conducted, which can help small airports determine whether they are effectively serving their communities.

The primary drawback to using U.S. DOT data to evaluate the impact of a marketing campaign is the lag time (usually 4 months) that it takes to publish the data. Thus, the data is very useful to analyze the effectiveness of a marketing program once the program is completed, but it is not sufficiently current to permit mid-course corrections to most marketing programs.

## REGIONAL MARKET SHARE TRENDS

---

One technique employing U.S. DOT data that may prove useful in air service development activities is to measure your airport's market share in relation to other airports in the region. For example, if there are three airports in the region that make up your market area, you might want to measure what percentage or share of the passengers you capture when the three airports' passenger volumes are combined.

By measuring your airport's share of passengers over a period of time, you could see if your marketing efforts are having a positive impact. If your airport accounted for 20% of the region's passengers over a period of time, and after your marketing program, your participation rose to 23%, this would certainly be a positive indicator. On the other hand, a decline in market share might indicate that there are competitive issues which you need to address with marketing.

One of the benefits of using a metric that measures your airport's performance on a relative basis (percent of market passengers) rather than merely looking at the change in total passenger volume at your airport is that it removes the effect of the economic cycle. For example, in good economic times, you might see that the passenger volume at your airport is rising. However, other airports in the region might be seeing the same rise in passengers. It is possible that even though passenger volume is rising at your airport, your share of the passengers in the region is actually declining—a situation that might require your attention. In simple terms, "a rising tide lifts all boats," and you want to ensure that your boat is rising faster than the others.

On the other hand, a decline in passenger volume should be viewed relative to what is happening at other airports in the region. It's difficult to characterize a decline in passenger volume as a positive sign, but if your share of the region is increasing despite the decline, your marketing efforts might be the reason.

## JOINT AIRPORT/AIRLINE MONITORING APPROACH

As noted, U.S. DOT data is historical; it is not forward looking. The only source of forward looking data pertaining to passenger volume is the airlines' advance booking activity. Most airlines have sophisticated revenue management systems. Tracking and evaluating advance booking trends is a critical part of the revenue management function.

If you are launching a marketing program designed to increase passenger volume at the airport, you might want to discuss the effort with your incumbent air carrier(s) to see if they would be willing to provide some insight as to the trends they are seeing in future bookings. This could prove to be very helpful to your efforts, for it would provide the most current input possible and give you a "real time" evaluation of your program.

There are several cautionary notes concerning this approach. One is that most airlines consider this type of data proprietary and may not be willing to share it. Also, even if the airline provided you with the booking data, it is unlikely that you or anyone else outside of the airline would be able to correctly interpret the trends. Airlines have staffs of analysts trained to evaluate changes in future booking trends.

Rather than the raw data, what you should seek is the airline's analysis of the change in future bookings at your airport. Make sure that the airline is aware that the program you are implementing is intended to benefit them and that feedback on future bookings is an important part of the process.

It is unlikely that you will get definitive responses in this process. Most likely you will only be able to get some broad generalizations such as "bookings look stronger," or "we see no change in advance bookings." But even these broad statements can have value in monitoring your program. A positive response is encouraging and says you might be on the right track. A "no change" doesn't necessarily mean that the program is not working, but certainly indicates you should carefully review the program and what you hope to achieve.

### 8.3 MODIFY YOUR MARKETING PLAN

All marketing programs are works in progress. Airports that have on-going programs can continue activities that are effective and introduce one or two new initiatives that might involve greater attention to launch. The goal of course is to accomplish one objective and move on to the next. For general aviation airports, business development is often a matter of personal contacts and maintaining relationships. Lead generation, development, and conversion into airport business are on-going activities. Keeping in touch with your existing tenants is also part of the equation. Review and revise your marketing plan each year and remember to keep the marketing team informed, engaged, and acknowledged.

### 8.4 FUNDING SOURCES

For most small airports, funding for marketing comes from a variety of sources, including the airport operating budget, grants, and donations. Exhibit 8.1 lists alternative funding sources commonly used for small airport marketing.

**Exhibit 8.1—Alternative Funding Sources to Help Market the Airport.**

Grants	Cash Donations	In Kind	Cash Sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAA</li> <li>• SCASD</li> <li>• State DOT</li> <li>• Economic development organizations</li> <li>• Local government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Airport FBO</li> <li>• Fundraising events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experts in other local government departments</li> <li>• Experts on Airport Board</li> <li>• Ad agencies</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Local Radio &amp; TV</li> <li>• University or college</li> <li>• Marketing consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Economic development organizations</li> <li>• State DOT</li> <li>• FBO</li> <li>• Airlines</li> <li>• Other airports</li> </ul>

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

**FUNDING RESOURCES USED BY COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS**

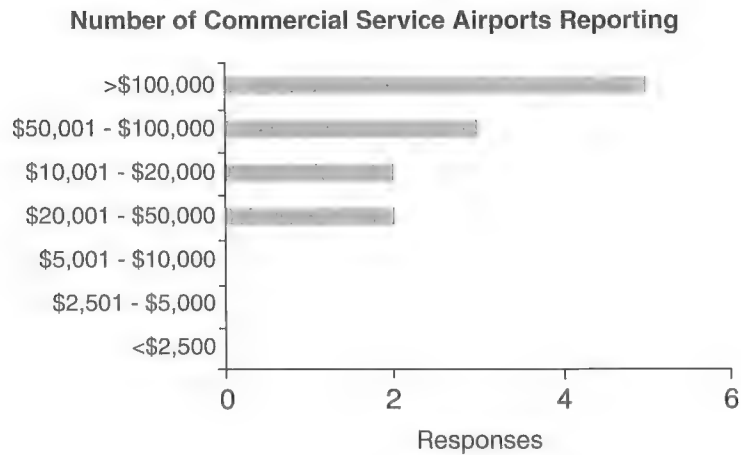
Many small commercial service airports have learned to be resourceful when funding marketing programs. The largest single source of marketing funds is the U.S. DOT's Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) Pilot Program. Some states, such as Michigan, Minnesota, and Wyoming also provide grants for airport marketing programs.

In the survey research, commercial service airports reported spending more than \$10,000 in the previous year on marketing, with five of the airports reporting spending over \$100,000. Keep in mind, however, that this selection of airports may not be representative. The research team believes that the airports surveyed spend a greater than average amount on marketing. In particular, three of the larger airports—Ft. Wayne, Huntsville, and Newport News—were included specifically because their marketing programs are known in the industry, and therefore it is logical to assume that they have significant marketing budgets, probably more than small airports typically have available.

All airports obtained some marketing funding from the airport operating budget (see Exhibit 8.2). In addition, 9 of the 12 airports reported receiving grant funding—either from a SCASD grant, a state grant, or other grant. Seven airports reported receiving in-kind contributions—perhaps the most unusual being the donation of locally made Vera Bradley handbags to be used in promotions.

The State of Wyoming and its commercial service airports are a good example of a group application for a SCASD grant. In this case, a state contribution of \$100,000 plus the SCASD grant of \$800,000 meant that each airport needed only to contribute \$10,000 to participate in the program.

Several airports reported receiving special local government appropriations for marketing—individual donations, or matching funds from private businesses.

**Exhibit 8.2—Annual Spending for Marketing.**

Source: Airport Marketing Survey 2008

### FUNDING RESOURCES USED BY GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

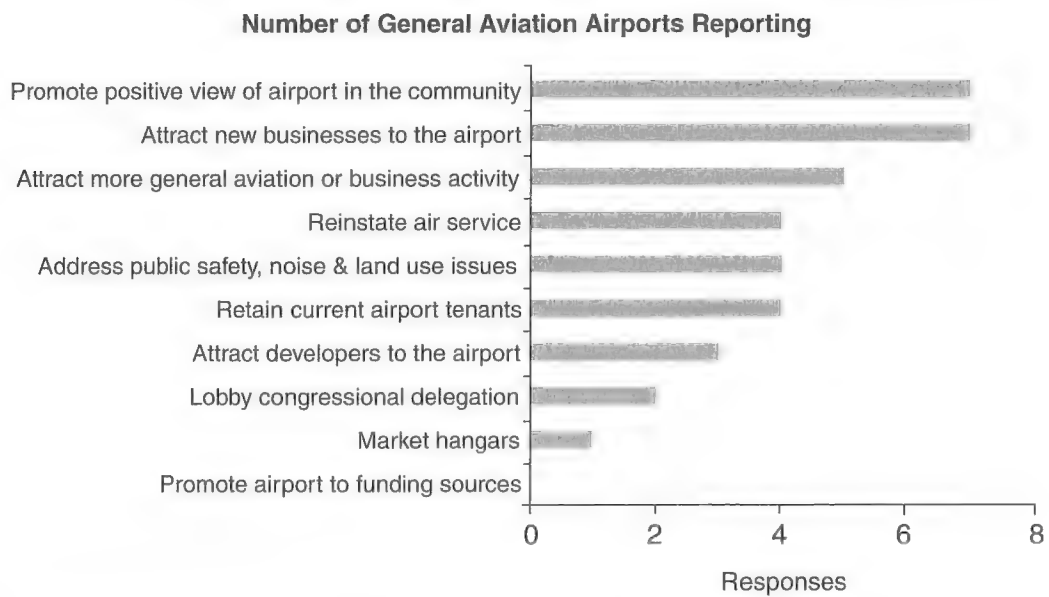
As with staffing resources, funding for marketing at general aviation airports is more limited than at commercial service airports. General aviation airports reported spending from \$0 to more than \$100,000. The smallest general aviation airports had little or no money to spend on marketing and only the largest general aviation airports had sizeable budgets and dedicated resources (internal or external) to carry out their marketing plans.

The greatest amount of money was spent at those airports seeking to restore commercial service. Funds were used on more expensive forms of traditional marketing such as print advertising, radio and TV spots, and consulting services in support of securing commercial service. These funds most often came from airport operating budgets, followed by various types of grants.

However, for general aviation airports not seeking reinstatement of air service, most marketing funds came from the airport's operating budget, from special state grants or from joint marketing efforts with either the chamber of commerce or the FBO. Typical budgets for small general aviation did not exceed \$5,000. Airports surveyed reported that funds went equally to either attracting new business to the airport or to promoting a positive view of the airport in the community. Exhibit 8.3 shows how marketing funds were used by general aviation airports.



**Exhibit 8.3—Ways that General Aviation Airports Use Marketing Funds.**



Source: Airport Marketing Survey 2008

## PART 3

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

# CHAPTER 9

## MARKETING TOOLS

- 9.1 Index of Marketing Tools
- 9.2 Categories of Marketing Tools

Small airports use a wide range of marketing and advertising techniques depending on the subject, the audience they are trying to reach, their budget, and other factors. This chapter provides an index of the marketing tools described in subsequent chapters and also introduces the basic categories of marketing tools.

### 9.1 INDEX OF MARKETING TOOLS

Exhibit 9.1 provides an alphabetical listing of the marketing tools described in Chapters 10 through 12, along with an estimate of the relative cost of each tool and the perceived effectiveness of the tool when used by commercial service and general aviation airports.

The important qualifications to note in using the index are as follows:

- The index includes an estimate of the relative cost of individual tools. However, the actual cost of each tool varies depending on the metropolitan area in which the tool is used and other factors.
- There are differences of opinion as to the effectiveness of each tool. For some tools, where the differences are particularly strong, we have indicated that in the index.
- The circumstances of each situation will determine whether a particular tool is appropriate regardless of any overall “rating” of that tool. The index attempts to cover some of these issues; however, it is a simplified look at the range of marketing tools.

### 9.2 CATEGORIES OF MARKETING TOOLS

The following three chapters divide marketing tools into three broad categories:

- Public relations
- Advertising
- Networking

Why should you start with public relations, instead of with advertising? Isn't public relations a specialized activity requiring media consultants? Contrary to what many people think, public relations includes a broad range of tools to promote a favorable relationship with the public. Many of these tools are commonly used by small airports.

The primary difference between public relations and advertising is that with public relations, the airport does not pay for the media coverage, whereas with advertising, the airport does pay for the coverage, in the form of advertising. Both public relations and advertising make use of mass media. However, public relations techniques are especially important for small airports because they enable those airports to garner favorable publicity for free or low cost, without the need for a large advertising budget.

## Exhibit 9.1—Index of Marketing Tools.

Marketing Tools	Essential Tool	Cost	Effectiveness		Page
			Commercial Service	General Aviation	
Advertising - Billboards		\$ - \$\$\$\$	● ● ●	●	102
Advertising - Direct Mail		\$ - \$\$\$\$	●		96
Advertising - Internet		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	110
Advertising - Magazine		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	94
Advertising - Newspaper		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	●	94
Advertising - Other Outdoor (Buses, etc.)		\$ - \$\$\$\$	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	103
Advertising - Radio		\$ - \$	○	●	108
Advertising - Trade Journals		\$ - \$	●	● ● ● ● ●	94
Advertising - TV		\$ - \$	● ● ●	●	108
Air Shows		\$ - \$	○	○	81
Articles - Newspaper, Magazine	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	94
Awards & Special Recognitions		\$	●	●	76
Banners, flags, awnings		\$ - \$	● ● ●	● ● ●	104
Board Participation - Non-Profit Organizations		\$	●		89
Contact Managers		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	130
Contests & Drawings		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	84
Customer Satisfaction Surveys		\$		●	90
Digital Video		\$	● ●	● ●	109
Direct Mail		\$ - \$\$\$\$	●	●	96
Earned Media	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	70
Economic Impact Studies		\$ - \$\$\$\$	●	● ● ●	90
Educational Programs		\$ - \$\$\$	●	● ● ●	82
Free Services & Amenities		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	85
Giveaways		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	85
Interviews (Radio and TV)	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	76
Lobbying		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	130
Marketing Brochure		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	96
Networking - Business, Civic, Non-Profit Groups	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	119
Networking - Professional & Industry Organizations		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	122
Networking - Strategic Partnerships		\$	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	127
Networking - Tradeshow & Conferences		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	123
Newsletter - Electronic		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	90
Newsletter - Print		\$ - \$	● ● ●	● ● ●	90
Open Houses		\$ - \$	● ● ●	○	81
Outdoor Advertising - Other		\$ - \$\$\$\$	● ● ● ● ●	●	101
Press Coverage - Newspaper, TV, Radio	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	70
Press Kit	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	72
Press Releases	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	73
Promotions		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	83
Public Service Announcement		\$	●	●	76
Public Speaking	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	78
Rates & Charges Reductions		\$ - \$\$\$	●	●	86
Signage - Banners, Displays		\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	101
Speeches - Chambers and Business Associations	★	\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	79
Speeches - Dedications & Community Events		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	79
Sponsoring Community Events		\$ - \$\$\$	●	● ● ●	88
Sponsoring Interns & Students		\$ - \$	●	● ● ●	87
Testimonials		\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	91
Volunteering		\$	●	● ● ●	87
Website	★	\$ - \$\$\$	● ● ●	● ● ●	110
White Papers		\$ - \$	●	●	92
<b>Key</b>					
Costs		\$ - \$\$\$\$			
Effectiveness		● ● ● ● ●			
Divided Opinions on Effectiveness		○			

Source: Oliver Wyman, March 2009

Advertising does have its advantages. Advertising provides airports with control over the timing and content of their message. On the other hand, while public relations affords airports much less control over the coverage they receive, that coverage may have much greater credibility.

Chapter 12, *Networking Opportunities*, may be viewed properly as a subset of public relations, because networking also involves promoting a favorable image with the public without the use of paid advertising. However, networking is a sufficiently important part of airport marketing to merit its own chapter.

Chapter 10, *Public Relations Tools*, includes some of the least expensive and most effective forms of marketing. This chapter describes the major public relations categories including the following:

- **Earned media**—free media as opposed to paid media or advertising, which may be gained through the use of press releases, interviews, awards, etc.
- **Public speaking**—at multiple venues, including chamber of commerce events, dedications, educational workshops, and charity events
- **Events**—air shows and open houses
- **Promotions**—contests and drawings, giveaways, free services
- **Sponsorships and volunteering**—ways to garner publicity in addition to contributing to the community

Chapter 11, *Advertising Tools*, includes a description of the primary categories of advertising tools:

- **Print media**—including print ads in newspapers, magazines, and trade journals; direct mail pieces (e.g., post cards, flyers, etc.) sent out to targeted audiences; glossy marketing brochures that feature the airport; airport business cards and stationery that include its brand (e.g., logo, tagline, etc.); and testimonials or written statements from customers and colleagues that are used to promote the airport through all forms of print media.
- **Signage**—including (1) billboards and large posters; (2) banners, flags, and awnings; and, (3) display signage. Advertising expense correlates with size of the signage. Bigger is more expensive.
- **Internet and website tools**—including the airport website, as well as email distributions, and Internet advertising.

Chapter 12 describes the myriad networking possibilities available to airport managers, many of which are effective at targeting specific audiences and building good will and awareness of the airport's important role in the community. This chapter also discusses opportunities with the following:

- Business, civic, and non-profit groups
- Professional organizations
- Tradeshows and conferences
- Strategic partnerships

In addition, the chapter discusses options to use contact management tools and other online networking venues.

# CHAPTER 10

## PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

- 10.1 What Is Public Relations?
- 10.2 Earned Media
- 10.3 Public Speaking
- 10.4 Events
- 10.5 Promotions
- 10.6 Sponsorships and Volunteering
- 10.7 Other Public Relations Materials

### 10.1 WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

AOPA is known for its effective public relations efforts. In AOPA's "The Guide to Obtaining Community Support for Your Local Airport" (AOPA, Frederick, Maryland, 2008), public relations is defined as follows:

"PR is not just publicity—it involves EVERYTHING the airport is and does that addresses or affects the public interest. The best time to start a planned, positive public relations program is before you need it, probably right now."

The AOPA Guide continues by pointing out that "some airport operators and aviation people believe that a low profile will avoid difficulties."

"Actually, there is no such thing as a low profile for an active airport. The mere fact that an airport exists means people will have opinions about it. The low profile approach is a head-in-the-sand self-delusion."

A public relations program should include community involvement, political action, and media relations. Ideally, it should be launched BEFORE negative public opinion builds into action and continued even when no crisis threatens."

In the end, public relations is about influencing opinion. Since no airport exists in a vacuum, your airport probably already has a formal or informal public relations program. This chapter presents tools you can use to initiate or add to your existing public relations program.

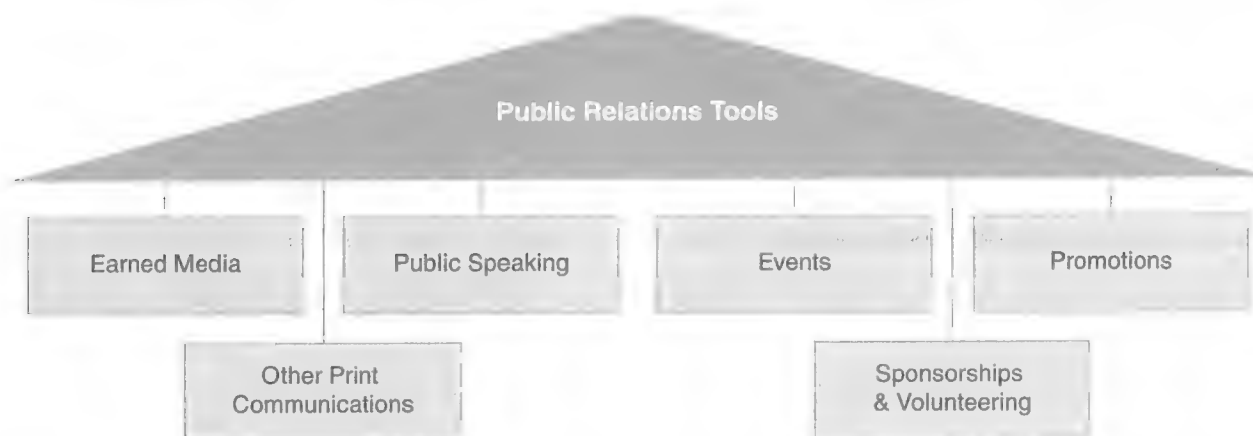
#### 10.1.1 PUBLIC RELATIONS VERSUS ADVERTISING

The basic difference between public relations and advertising is that public relations involves getting free publicity for the airport—from news conferences to press releases—while advertising involves payment for advertising. Although public relations activities are not truly free because they require staff time and other resources, they involve much less cost than traditional advertising. Public relations also produces particularly effective airport marketing results.

### 10.1.2 THE SCOPE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

The scope of public relations activities is very broad and includes the activities as shown in Exhibit 10.1, as well as others.

**Exhibit 10.1—Public Relations Tools.**



Source: Oliver Wyman

The following sections cover each of these activities. Within each section, the specific marketing tools are analyzed. For example, earned media includes press releases, featured articles and stories, radio and television, and so forth.

## 10.2 EARNED MEDIA

Cost \$	Effectiveness		Essential Tool ★
	Commercial Service ...	General Aviation ...	

**Definition:** *Earned media refers to favorable publicity gained through an article in the newspaper or an interview on television or a radio station. Unlike paid advertising, earned media coverage often carries more credibility in the minds of consumers because the information is delivered and received through the filter of a credible news organization. Earned media is NOT free. Significant effort, persistence and follow-up are required to successfully generate and sustain earned media coverage.*

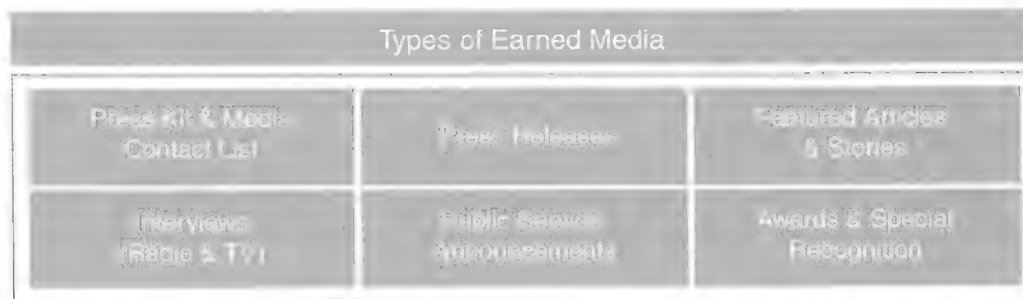
Skillful use of free and low cost marketing techniques can provide a marketing campaign that is larger and more pervasive than often thought possible with a modest budget. Perhaps the most effective tool in the quest to have the largest possible marketing campaign at the lowest cost is earned media.

Many airports are adept at getting media attention through press releases, featured articles and stories, interviews on radio and television, and public services announcements. Special awards and recognition earned by airports also provide an excellent means to attract attention and coverage. Earned media goes out across several channels including: radio, television, newspapers and magazines, and the Internet.



This section describes a variety of ways to get earned media and how to put together a good press kit that is always available to the media that answers basic questions about the airport. Exhibit 10.2 shows the types of earned media described in this section.

#### Exhibit 10.2—Types of Earned Media.

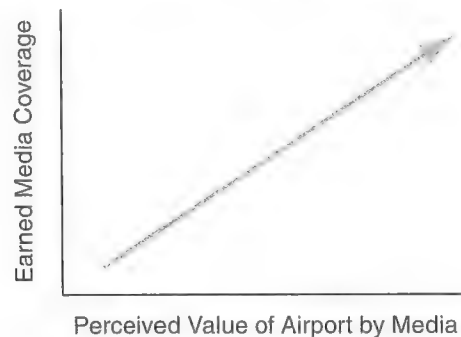


Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

#### 10.2.1 HOW TO “EARN” FREE PUBLICITY

It should not be assumed that the media outlet knows about or understands the value of the airport to the community and its overall economic contribution. Thus, a vital objective of the airport manager is to educate the media outlet about the airport’s value. The more the media recognizes this value, the greater the chances for coverage (see Exhibit 10.3). Knowledge of the community and of the audience and a carefully thought out approach to the media can pay big dividends in garnering free publicity.

#### Exhibit 10.3—Coverage versus Perceived Value.



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

Apart from being free, another important aspect of earned media is that the coverage may have *greater credibility* because it is news, not advertising, and the coverage may attract more attention than paid advertising because it is news.

10.2.2 THE PRESS KIT

	Effectiveness		
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation	Essential Tool
\$	...	...	🔗

**Definition:** A Press Kit contains information and photos about the airport. It is used to submit publicity materials to media for consideration.

A typical Press Kit includes the following:

- A website or physical cover with the airport’s brand (logo, message, graphics, and colors)
- Information for media inquiries
  - Office hours
  - Phone numbers
  - How to request an interview
  - Parking and “live broadcast trucks”
  - Airport access
- Factsheet about the airport
- Image library (photos of the airport)
- Airport newsletter
- News releases
- Staff biographies
- Members of the airport governing group (airport commission or authority)
- Airport tenants and businesses
- Airport statistics
- Airport financial records
- Business cards and stationery that carry the airport’s brand are used in the press kit

Radio, print, and television media all have different lead times for submission of publicity materials. Generally, television requires the longest lead time of 1 to 6 months, and radio and print have the shortest, 1 week to 2 months. To learn about lead time requirements, contact the producer or editor of the specific publication or station.

Except in the case of breaking news, press kits need to be sent in hardcopy or electronically well in advance of publication deadlines in order to be considered for placement. Following this general practice will improve the odds for placement of publicity in relevant publications and or at shows.

### 10.2.3 THE PRESS RELEASE

	Effectiveness		
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation	Essential Tool ✪
\$	...	...	

**Definition:** The press release or news release is a short, written document with a clear headline at the top, sufficient facts and quotes to support a news story, brief supporting background on the airport, a date, and contact information for journalists who want to follow up with a telephone call to get more information or to arrange an interview.

Small airports use press releases to attract media attention, and airport managers report that this is a particularly effective and inexpensive way to market the airport. Press releases may get lost in larger markets where they are competing against many other information sources, but in smaller markets, they appear to draw attention. The press releases prompt local newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations to provide coverage both through their primary medium and on the Internet.

#### TYPICAL FORMAT FOR A PRESS RELEASE

Press releases are structured using a very specific format (see Exhibit 10.4). Make sure to include the 5 Ws of advertising (who, what, when, where, and why) in the body of the press release. Other techniques to grab attention include (1) a strong lead in sentence, (2) the use of quotes to give the press release a personal touch, and (3) inclusion of human interest highlights. Make sure to include the airport's brand/logo at the top of the press release for easy identification.

#### Exhibit 10.4—Press Release Format.



(Your Airport Logo)

#### NEWS RELEASE

Date: The date you are sending this to the media

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

(Name, Department, Title)

(Phone Number)

(Email Address) optional

SUBJECT: A brief topic or event description, typically 5 words or less

(The body of the press release is very basic; who, what, where, when and why. The first paragraph of the press release should contain in brief detail what the press release is about.)

(The second paragraph explains, in detail: who cares; why you should care; where one can find it; when it will happen. Also, included in the second paragraph is generally a quote that gives the release a personal touch.)

“Touchy-feelies” go a long way with journalists. Press releases and news stories are boring to journalists without a “human interest.” The third and generally final paragraph identifies department contact information and where the reader can get information, i.e., website, telephone numbers, etc.).

(The content of the press release should be typed in a clear, basic font (Times New Roman is preferred). Your release should be about a page and generally no more than 400 to 500 words. If your press release exceeds one page, the second page should indicate “Page Two” in the upper right hand corner and “more” should appear at the bottom of the first page. Journalistic standards have set basic parameters to define the end of a press release: ### these three # symbols, centered directly underneath the last line of the release indicate the end of a press release. Finally, verify your facts and check your spelling. Once a mistake is printed or reported in the media it is difficult to get it corrected.)

###

---

Source: Content provided by the Greeley-Weld County Airport; Public Information Plan, posted on their website at [www.gxy.net](http://www.gxy.net)

## IMPROVING THE ODDS THAT THE AIRPORT’S PRESS RELEASE WILL GET MEDIA ATTENTION

---

A press release is more likely to get media attention when it follows some basic rules.

- Target specific media (e.g., local community newspaper) that will be interested and a good fit for your airport’s specific press release.
- Use generally accepted press release formatting.
- Provide facts and pertinent information in the press release.
- Check your facts and make sure the document is without error.
- Include something helpful that the media can quote.
- Find human interest topics to include in the content of the press release.
- Meet all media deadlines.
- Provide complete contact information on *all* pages of a press release.
- Develop relationships with contacts within media organizations over time and nurture those relationships.

## EXAMPLES OF AIRPORT PRESS RELEASES

---

Exhibit 10.5 is an excerpt from a press release issued by the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. It announces an initiative to enhance passengers’ travel experience at this small Pennsylvania commercial service airport with 13,000 enplanements in 2006. The press release includes a quote from the airport director and could be run as an earned media story with minimal changes.

**Exhibit 10.5—Press Release Excerpt from Arnold Palmer Regional Airport.****NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Tuesday, Apr. 11, 2006****Airport Authority Launches  
“Passenger PLUS”**

The Westmoreland County Airport Authority has given its nod to a new passenger comfort and convenience initiative at Arnold Palmer Regional Airport.

It's called “Passenger PLUS” and it's designed to enhance the travel experience before passengers even enter the terminal.

After parking at no cost, new luggage carts will soon be available to make getting luggage from the trunk to the counter less of a chore. Carts will also be stationed inside the terminal to ease arriving passengers' burdens. The plan also calls for reconfiguring the walkway from the parking area to the terminal, which should make the short trek even smoother.

But the cornerstone of the new convenience-based initiative is the opening of a flight lounge in the terminal lobby where travelers can relax, enjoy a cup of coffee or a soft drink and a snack or even a sandwich (at certain times) while they await boarding.

“We're playing to our strengths,” said Airport Manager Gabe Monzo. “Comfort and convenience have always been a hallmark of this airport, so we're focusing on the most important aspect of air travel—the passenger.”

The lounge will feature continental-style offerings in the morning and passengers on the afternoon flights will be able to place food and drink orders with DeNunzio's Italian Chophouse, located on the second floor of the terminal. They won't need to worry about climbing the stairs or missing a boarding call. Wait staff will deliver those orders to the lounge, only a few steps from the security screening area. . . .

---

Source: Arnold Palmer Regional Airport

**10.2.4 FEATURED ARTICLES AND STORIES**

Cost \$	Effectiveness		Essential Tool ☆
	Commercial Service ...	General Aviation ...	

**Definition:** Airports usually have good relationships with local newspapers and can encourage travel articles that mention the fares and air service available from the local airport. In some communities, local newspapers and television stations have run stories highlighting the economic importance of the local airport. Airport open houses, air shows, competitions, and educational events also provide opportunities for featured articles and stories.

Featured articles provide excellent free publicity and can be obtained for newsworthy topics. Chances of obtaining a feature article can be increased by sending out a press release on newsworthy airport topics or events, or a press kit with a media advisory or cover letter that provides the particular details about the topic or event.

In some cases, journalists will want to interview the airport manager as a means of expanding on the content of the featured article, so be prepared.

## 10.2.5 INTERVIEWS (RADIO AND TELEVISION)

Cost \$	Effectiveness		Essential Tool ☼
	Commercial Service	General Aviation	
	...	...	

**Definition:** Airport managers have an opportunity to be interviewed by the media for airing on local radio and television shows, especially newscasts.

As the person being interviewed, there are some general guidelines to follow for radio and television shows. They may sound obvious, but they are still worth remembering.

- Be prepared. Bring pertinent materials with you to the interview, even if you have sent them in advance.
- Deliver your message. Prepare your own message and make sure that you have thought of a short, memorable way to explain it.
- Augment the interview. For a television, use visuals including photos, slides, and print materials.
- Develop a list of questions. Prepare the list for the interviewer to follow. This will make the interviewer's work easier, will guide the content of the interview, and will ensure that the main topics are covered.
- Find out the details of the interview. Beforehand, find out the length and topics that the interviewer wants to cover (in addition to the questions you provide).
- Dress appropriately. You represent the airport, so dress appropriately for both television and radio interviews.
- Obtain a tape of the interview. Use the tape in future marketing efforts (e.g., website stream).

## 10.2.6 PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cost \$	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
	•	•

**Definition:** A public service or community service announcement is a non-commercial advertisement broadcast on radio or television that is intended to raise public awareness about specific issues at the airport. These days, public service announcements about airports are typically about security levels and safety.

## 10.2.7 AWARDS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Cost \$	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
	•	•

**Definition:** Awards and special recognition provide a way for airports to attract earned media, either through a press release, featured article, or interview.

Exhibit 10.6 is an example of an announcement from the Greeley-Weld County Airport regarding receipt of the “Outstanding Airport Award” from the Colorado Pilots Association.

#### **Exhibit 10.6—Greeley-Weld County Airport Outstanding Service Announcement.**

---

### **GREELEY-WELD COUNTY AIRPORT AND BUSINESSES RECEIVE SERVICE AWARD**

The Greeley-Weld County Airport, and two of its based businesses, will be the recipients of the “2005 Outstanding Airport” awarded by the Colorado Pilots Association this Saturday, November 5th, 2005 at Centennial Airport in Englewood.

The award is presented by the Colorado Pilots Association to those airports and airport businesses which have provided exceptional service to the flying public. Harris Aviation, which also operates Peak Flight Support at the airport, and the Barnstormer Restaurant, were both named as key contributors in the success of the airport in the association’s decision to make this award.

The level of customer support provided by both businesses was noted by members of the Colorado Pilots Association as being exceptional in nature. Additionally, the association, in making their decision, quoted the Greeley-Weld County Airport Authority’s commitment in making numerous physical improvements to the airport over the past few years, and its exceptional management of the facility, as another key factor.

---

Source: Greeley-Weld County Airport; [www.gxy.net](http://www.gxy.net)

## **10.2.8 TIPS FOR USING EARNED MEDIA**

An important ingredient to any publicity campaign is making the right media contacts and then developing and nurturing those relationships over time. However, it is not enough to know the contact person; it is also important to have newsworthy stories. That means it is important for the airport to be (1) innovative and creative in the activities it chooses to pursue and (2) strategic about the ways it publicizes those activities.

**Earned Media = the Right Media Contact Plus a Newsworthy Story**

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

---

Regarding contacts, each media organization is run differently, and the most efficient way to identify the right individual in a given organization is to call and ask who covers the airport. Some general guidelines for locating the right person in media organizations follow:

- News stations—assignment editor, further delineated as morning, evening, and weekend assignment editors
- Television programs or features—producer
- Public service announcements—director of public or community affairs
- Radio programs—program director or, for a news item, news director
- Newswires—reporters for specialized stories; or editor or bureau chief for smaller shops
- Newspapers—reporter who covers airports



## ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A MEDIA CONTACT LIST

Airports should establish and maintain a media contact list:

- A media contact list will provide a thorough and easy way to distribute your airport's media content over time. Include email addresses because this may be the main method for the airport to keep in touch with the media.
- People change jobs frequently, so it is important to keep the media contact list and all contact information current.
- Expand the media contact list as you develop new media relationships.

## THE HIDDEN COST OF EARNED MEDIA

Earned media is known as “free” publicity in that there is no cost to place or run the publicity. However, there are some hidden costs involved when pursuing earned media opportunities.

The most significant of these hidden costs is labor. Someone has to develop, maintain, and distribute the airport's press kit, write the press releases, cultivate relationships with journalists and producers, and so forth. In small airports, that “someone” may be, solely, the airport manager. Hence, it is important to pursue earned media opportunities that are likely to yield results for the airport—where the airport's story is likely to be chosen by those who make decisions about what is newsworthy.

To cut down on these hidden costs, look for volunteers who can provide assistance. Student interns looking to gain experience in public relations would be an excellent place to start. Consider partnering with other organizations in the community that share similar goals, such as the chamber of commerce. In this manner, the work that is required to generate earned media interest, such as cultivating relationships, can be shared.

The Internet is also an excellent way to distribute press releases and press kits.

## 16.3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Cost \$	Effectiveness		Essential Tool ☺
	Commercial Service ...	General Aviation ...	

**Definition:** Public speaking opportunities permit airport managers to tell their story in a public setting and are available in a variety of arenas including business, civic, professional, and educational, some certainly more formal than others. For this chapter, public speaking is discussed from two perspectives: (1) guest speaking at local events and (2) presentations at conferences or tradeshow.

Public speaking engagements are one of the most effective and inexpensive ways that you can influence opinion and communicate a positive image of the airport to your stakeholders and the community at large. Public speaking is also a concrete way for airport managers to develop and maintain good relationships across many different organizations and groups. These relationships in turn can help the airport achieve its development goals, its air service objectives, and its revenue and funding objectives.

Public speaking is also an important vehicle for expanding your network of colleagues, friends, and champions of the airport. These relationships, cultivated over time, can be a resource of community leadership, financial support, and joint ventures to accomplish the community's and airport's goals.

Speaking engagements are mostly a volunteer effort. It is important to let people know that you enjoy and welcome the opportunity to speak in public. If they know you are open and available, they will ask for your participation.

Here is a list of local speaking opportunities:

- Chamber of commerce, Rotary, and Kiwanis club events
- Dedications and ribbon cutting events
- Educational workshops
- High school and college graduations
- Charity events
- Opening remarks at recognition ceremonies

Chapter 12 contains a description of conferences and conventions that airport personnel frequently attend. These meetings include exhibit halls, social events, panels of speakers, and key note speakers. Participation on panels and organizational committees provides an excellent opportunity to increase your airport's visibility.

There is a large (and often overlooked) body of material on becoming an effective public speaker. An effective speaker will be invited to speak more often just because he or she is interesting and engaging. Therefore, do not overlook the value of improving your public speaking skills. It is important for all public speakers to obtain objective feedback so that they can improve their skills.

## TIPS FOR VISUAL AIDS

---

- Make sure visual aids are visible to the audience.
- Keep visual aids content at a "high level" and easy to understand.
- Use creative and colorful visual aids, but do not let them upstage you.
- Use visual aids to enhance the content of the speech.
- Use visual aids to engage the audience and encourage participation.

Visual aids are an important part of many presentations, and they assist the speaker in achieving a variety of goals including breaking the ice, engaging the audience, building rapport, getting the message across, and so forth. The most commonly used visual aids are computer-based presentation programs and flip charts. Many airport managers develop a basic presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint and customize a few slides for specific audiences.

## USING POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS EFFECTIVELY

---

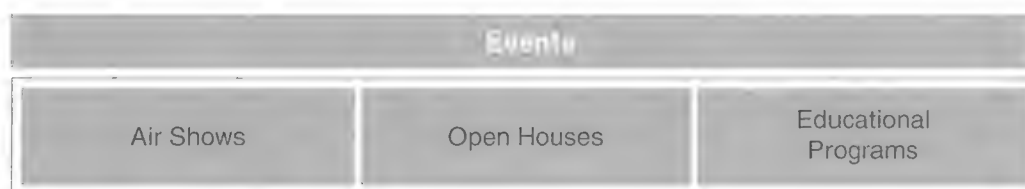
- Do not read the slides to your audience.
- Make sure the audience can see and read the text.

- Choose colors that make the text easier to read.
- Use bullet points instead of full sentences.
- Incorporate images that your audience can relate to and enjoy.
- PowerPoint should be a “visual aid”—not the entire show.

## 10.4 EVENTS

Events are a common form of public relations and have been embraced by airports over the years. They are usually structured as open houses, air shows, or educational programs such as Young Eagles. These events provide an opportunity for the airport to showcase its facilities and services and to create a memorable, positive experience for the general public. Exhibit 10.7 contains events commonly used for public relations.

### Exhibit 10.7—Types of Airport Events.



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

Many airport managers believe events such as open houses, air shows, and educational programs help build community awareness about the airport, its facilities, and its services. Programs such as Young Eagles are used to help pull in the next generation of pilots. Air shows showcase outstanding talent and can draw large crowds to the airport during the event. These events also provide great earned media opportunities, a definite plus for airports working to raise public awareness about their presence in the community.

Other airport managers question the value of air shows and open houses because of the amount of work involved and the disruption to airport operations. There is also some question among airport managers as to whether these events result in new or increased business for the airport during the rest of the year. These events can be very labor intensive. The pros and cons of “putting on an event” should be weighed carefully before embarking on such an endeavor.

Regardless of which type of airport event is being considered, here are important questions to answer:

1. What are the specific marketing objectives of the event?
2. Is the event likely to be successful in terms of achieving the marketing objectives of the airport?
3. What activities will take place at the event, and does the airport have the resources, such as parking, safety, and security to adequately support them?
4. Can the airport staff put on the event while conducting regular airport business, or does the airport need to recruit volunteers from the community to help with the event?
5. Will the event interfere with any critical airport activities?
6. Do the airport’s current tenants, immediate neighbors, and other key stakeholders support the idea of the event?

7. Does this event have a historical foundation or tradition, and if so, what will be the impact of canceling or changing the concept of the event on the airport's relationship with the community?
8. How much will it cost to put on the event, and does the airport have the funds?
9. Is this event the best use of the airport's available marketing budget?
10. What are other sources of volunteers, funding, or sponsorship for the event?

#### 10.4.1 AIR SHOWS

	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
Cost		
\$\$\$	○	○

**Definition:** Air shows are events in which the public gets to see aircraft perform, as well to view the aircraft on the ground. They are the most elaborate type of event that an airport can undertake. An article published in *The Journal Record* (Oklahoma City) titled "Air Show Planning Not So Simple" by Bill May, *The Journal Record* staff reporter (September 26, 1997) describes the transformation of air shows, historically, from simple affairs to complex and competitive events today.

"Back in olden times, putting on an air show was a relatively simple thing. All you had to do was find a few people who owned airplanes and would agree to fly, bring a couple of jets and the crowd was thrilled. Nowadays, things are not so simple. Wing walkers, parachute jumps and "loop-de-loops" are not enough. Audiences are much more sophisticated and they demand more—and not just in numbers, but in variety. The problem is there is more and more competition for the truly good air show acts and for the available airplanes."

For airports that decide to pursue an air show, check out "The Complete Guide to Holding an Airport Open House," a publication of the AOPA Airport Support Network at [www.aopa.org/asn](http://www.aopa.org/asn) (AOPA, Frederick, Maryland). Included in this comprehensive publication are planning and scheduling tools, checklists, promotion, marketing and sponsorship ideas, and so forth.

One of the main public relations benefits of air shows is the volume and variety of earned media that accompanies such an event.

#### 10.4.2 OPEN HOUSES

	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
Cost		
\$-\$\$\$	●-●●	○

**Definition:** Airport open houses are events where the public is invited to see and learn more about the airport. Open houses take on many different forms depending on the resources and time available to plan and manage them. Often, airport open houses are held annually and sometimes correspond with another annual community event or national holiday such as Memorial Day or the 4th of July.

Programs at an airport open house include the following:

- Static displays of airplanes (sometimes historical in nature)
- Aerial demonstrations
- High speed “fly-bys”
- Activities for children
- Free airplane rides
- Exhibitors and booths
- Food and beverages

Open houses are a common type of promotional event used to increase public awareness and build community support. They are most effective when conducted with other community stakeholders, which enables airports to benefit from joint advertising, increased earned media coverage, and shared resources and costs.

The following are suggestions for an airport open house:

- Pick an annual date for the open house and stick to it; this is a good way to develop community awareness and increase attendance over time.
- Couple the airport open house with an annual holiday such as Memorial Day or the 4th of July to give it a holiday theme.
- Consider putting on a joint airport/community event and share in the work and the recognition.
- Debrief with airport staff and volunteers after the event to better understand what worked and what did not work for next time.
- Offer amenities such as free entry, free rides, and free parking.
- Run a contest or drawing.
- Provide activities for kids so they will want to come back to the open house again next year.
- Ask for help from community sponsors such as local businesses to garner corporate or in-kind contributions.
- Take advantage of earned media to promote the event and then report on the event’s success afterwards.

#### 10.4.3 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	••

**Definition:** Educational programs include a variety of programs such as the Young Eagles designed to educate young people (primarily) about aviation and to promote an interest in aviation.

“The EAA Young Eagles program was launched in 1992 to give interested young people, ages 8–17, the opportunity to go flying in an airplane. These flights are offered free of charge and are made possible through the generosity of EAA member volunteers” (from the EAA website, [www.young-eagles.org](http://www.young-eagles.org)).

In addition to programs such as the Young Eagles, airports often offer educational programs for primary and secondary students through their local school district including tours of the airport and aviation activities geared

for younger students. Airports also coordinate educational programs with high schools, community, and 4-year colleges to promote awareness of, and interest in, aviation-related careers.

#### 10.4.4 RELATIVE COST OF EVENTS

**Exhibit 10.8—Cost of Events.**



Source: Oliver Wyman

Airport events can take on many shapes and sizes. Typically the cost, in both time and money invested by the airport will increase as the level of complexity, duration, and size of participation increase (see Exhibit 10.8). Events have a way of “getting away from us,” meaning they start to expand beyond their original scope, and the time, energy, and funds invested in the event expand as well. When considering the scope of the event, try to make sure that it is structured in such a way as to achieve the public relations and marketing objectives of the airport. AOPA has published the following advice:

**“How much will it cost to hold an airport open house, and what are the income sources?”**

The answers to these two basic budget questions are as varied as the events themselves. Harriet Alexander Field in Salida, Colorado, held a one-day airport open house on a budget of just \$800. Admission was free, but the nonprofit organization that sponsored the open house earned income from dime-a-pound aircraft rides donated by local pilots.

That contrasts with the million dollars-plus budget required to conduct a major two-day open house and air show at a large metropolitan airport.

In-between is an event the size of the Scottsdale Air Fair. The two-day open house features a range of civil, military, and war bird static displays and fly-bys, attracts about 25,000 people, and operates on a budget of about \$300,000.” (From the AOPA “Complete Guide to Holding an Airport Open House”)

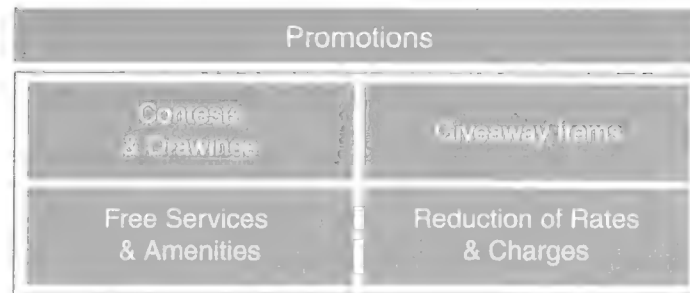
*Tip: Try to find a corporate sponsor for the event who may be able to donate cash and/or in-kind contributions. This is a means for the sponsor, through publicity, to generate good will in the community while benefiting the airport.*

Effectiveness		
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	•

**Definition:** Promotions include tools such as contests and drawings, giveaway items, and free services and amenities. Both general aviation and commercial service airports use promotions to promote the airport and improve its public image (see Exhibit 10.9).

Rates and charges reductions are also frequently offered. These are described in Section 10.5.4 for general aviation. For a full discussion of rates and charges reductions directed to commercial service air carriers, see *ACRP Report 18: Passenger Air Service Development Techniques*.

#### Exhibit 10.9—Types of Airport Promotions.



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

#### 10.5.1 CONTESTS AND DRAWINGS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	•

**Definition:** Airports have used a nearly endless array of contests to market themselves. Ideally, these contests rely on prizes donated by airlines, travel agencies, and local businesses. The contests may be held in conjunction with open houses or as independent events. They work best when they are widely publicized and not simply promoted at the airport.

Contests and drawings are used to achieve various public relations goals: to expose the airport's brand, to attract new users to the airport, to promote a positive image of the airport, and so forth. How contests and drawings are structured will depend on which of these goals the airport hopes to achieve, as well as the funds available.

One example of a successful promotion in conjunction with the launch of new service occurred at Tri-State Airport (Huntington, West Virginia) when Allegiant inaugurated nonstop service to Orlando, Florida. The airline donated a number of complimentary tickets to be used by the airport to promote the new service. Rather than devote all the tickets to a contest, the airport also donated some to the local Make-A-Wish Foundation. The event received a great deal of media coverage—good publicity for the airport, the airline, and the foundation.

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTESTS

- Make sure that the contest or drawing is "targeted," reaching its intended audience.
- Adequately promote the contest or drawing to increase participation by the targeted group.

- Structure the contest or drawing to encourage specific action to be taken by the targeted group.
- Define the budget for the contest/drawing and stay within it.
- Reduce the cost by finding sponsors to donate items for the contest or drawing.
- Incorporate the airport's brand in the contest or drawing to increase awareness.
- Use earned media opportunities to announce the contest, the winners, and so forth.
- Repeat the contest or drawing over time (e.g., run a monthly drawing) to build momentum.

## IDEAS TO STRUCTURE A CONTEST OR DRAWING

- Set up a contest box or bowl in the terminal, at a tradeshow booth, or at the FBO where participants can either drop in their business card or fill out a simple postcard with some basic information (name, contact information). Names drawn win a prize. Additionally, entrants' information can be added into the airport's contact database for future marketing efforts.
- Run a contest on the airport's website, asking participants to complete an online registration form to enter the contest. Randomly select a winner from the registrant list and add entrant names into the airport's contact database.
- Jointly run a contest or drawing with another community group, such as the chamber of commerce. Have first, second, and third place winners with three different prizes of increasing value. Ask chamber members (businesses) to help sponsor the contest.
- Structure a contest in such a way that requires the participants to use airport facilities to enter. Then select the winner from that pool of the contestants. Incorporate the airport's brand in the prize.

### 10.5.2 GIVEAWAYS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	•

**Definition:** Giveaway items are used to promote or advertise the airport, creating a top of mind awareness by incorporating the airport's brand (name, logo, and tag line) into the specific items.

To improve their effectiveness, giveaways should include items that people want to keep and use. These items can range from inexpensive ones such as luggage tags, pens, magnets, coffee mugs, water bottles, key chains, and calendars to more expensive one-of-a-kind items with an aviation theme. Typically, giveaways are handed out at tradeshows, conferences, public speeches, open houses, educational programs, and pretty much at any event that involves the airport. They can also be used as conversation ice breakers. There are a number of promotional item suppliers listed on the Internet, so do some comparative shopping for items, prices, and quality.

### 10.5.3 FREE SERVICES AND AMENITIES

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	•



**Definition:** Some common free services include free parking, free wireless Internet, complementary coffee, business centers, and so forth. At some airports, volunteer ambassadors meet and greet passengers entering the facility to answer questions and offer assistance.

Airports often use free services and amenities to promote the airport. They use customer service and convenience as a means to stand out from the competition. Giveaways can also be used as incentives. For example, give away an item to each person who completes an airport customer satisfaction survey to increase the overall response rate of the survey and to add this person to the airport's contact list.

$$\text{Giveaway Item} + \text{Specific Call to Action} = \text{Desired Outcome}$$

At general aviation airports, the FBOs frequently set the level of services offered. Some of the larger FBOs offer such amenities as conference rooms, sleeping and bathing facilities, gourmet catering, audio and video entertainment, crew lounge, exercise room, rental cars, and shuttle services to and from the airport. Sometimes the airport will co-sponsor services and facilities for general aviation passengers and pilots with the FBO.

#### 10.5.4 RATES AND CHARGES REDUCTIONS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	•

**Definition:** Rates and charges discounts are another way to promote the airport. In some cases, these discounts are tied directly to utilization by the passenger or general aviation user. At a certain level of utilization, these discounts “kick in” and accelerate to the point where certain fees are waived altogether.

One example is Sugar Land Regional Airport, the fourth largest airport in the greater Houston area and a significant general reliever airport. Touted as “the destination of choice for the business traveler in the Houston area,” the airport waives ramp fees with a minimum fuel purchase of 100LL or 50 gallons of Jet-A fuel. Commercial service airports can also waive rates and charges for passenger airlines, provided that reductions in rates or charges are for a promotional period or available to all carriers serving the particular airport.

To effectively use discounts on rates and charges, consider the following suggestions:

- Periodically, compare your airport's rates and charges to the competition; see what they are charging and whether they offer discounts, and if so, what types.
- Structure your airports rates and charges to be competitive and attractive.
- Then, promote them to your target audience using advertising and public relations tools.

#### 10.5.5 OTHER PROMOTIONS USED TO INCREASE COMMERCIAL SERVICE

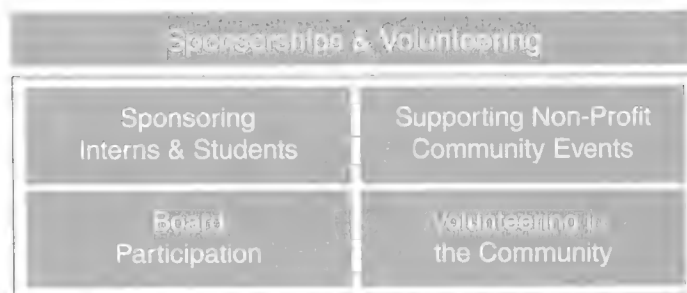
A variety of other promotional techniques have been applied to persuade passenger air carriers to initiate or continue air service. These include financial contributions from local businesses to market the airport, special local taxation earmarked for air service programs, frequent flyer incentives purchased by the local community, business fare reductions in exchange for community support, advance ticket purchase programs, and direct

passenger subsidies. Many of these promotions require the participation of the airlines serving the airport, as well as substantial local participation. This Guidebook does not cover airport marketing directed at the air carriers. Instead, that subject is covered in the broader discussion of air service development techniques contained in *ACRP Report 18: Passenger Air Service Development Techniques*.

Sponsorships and volunteering are two very effective public relations tools that can generate a significant amount of good will in the community on behalf of the airport (see Exhibit 10.10). In the Section 10.4, we described finding corporate sponsors to help financially support airport events such as open houses and air shows. "Sponsorships" in this chapter refer to the opportunities where the airport is the sponsor for a worthy cause. Volunteering or putting in time in the community is another way to help. Finally, participating on various non-profit boards is also a way to build relationships in the community, possibly with key stakeholders. All of these efforts will be noticed and appreciated.

## 10.6 SPONSORSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

**Exhibit 10.10—Types of Airport Sponsorships and Volunteering.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 10.6.1 SPONSORING INTERNS AND STUDENTS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$	•	••

**Definition:** Airports may hire student interns or sponsor aviation students at local schools.

Small airports provide a great opportunity and training ground for students interested in aviation careers. Developing reciprocal relationships through student internships with high schools, community, and 4-year colleges benefits the students, the schools, and the airport. It is a winning arrangement for the community and the airport, and one that airport managers should seriously consider when looking for resources to help with airport marketing and public relations activities.

An example of an airport sponsorship is provided by Centennial Airport, located in the south Denver metropolitan area. In addition to providing opportunities for interns and students seeking experience in aviation, the airport has

created a non-profit foundation, the Centennial Airport Foundation, which promotes aviation education and provides scholarships for aviation students. Exhibit 10.11 is a press release excerpt that highlights this scholarship:

**Exhibit 10.11—Excerpt from Press Release Announcing Centennial Airport’s 40th Birthday Celebration.**

“Over 450 people were in attendance to honor Centennial Airport’s 40th Anniversary Celebration. The event held in Parker on May 28th, 2008, was hosted by Centennial Airport, The South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, and The Wildlife Experience.

Distinguished guests included former and current airport commissioners, local and state government officials, founding airport supporters, aviation businesses, local aviation personalities, and aviation enthusiasts.

Keynote speaker Barrington Irving, the youngest person ever and the first black round-the-world solo pilot gave a remarkable and fascinating account of his record setting experience.

**Aviation student, Skyler Shaw was also in attendance and recognized for receiving the Centennial Airport Scholarship to Metropolitan State College of Denver.**

The Captain Elrey Jeppesen Award was presented by Jim Jeppesen, son of the late great aviation pioneer Elrey Jeppesen, to Larry Ulrich, founder and president of the Denver jetCenter, for his record of unique and meritorious work in and outside aviation.

Silent auctions were held for the commemorative and signed limited edition lithographs and taxiway desk light centerpieces, imbedded with special 40th Anniversary Centennial Airport challenge coins. **Over \$57,000 was raised in support of the Centennial Airport Foundation which promotes aviation education.**

An exquisite slide show played in the background during the luncheon which profiled Centennial Airport from its humble beginnings as an idea to support George Wallace’s struggling Denver Technological Center (DTC), to its essential key role as an economic supporter in the surrounding communities and its rise to the 3rd busiest general aviation airport in the country.

The event was a tremendous success which celebrated the many amazing stories, businesses, events, and people who have uniquely shaped Centennial to become the exceptional airport it is today.”

Source: Centennial Airport via <http://www.centennialairport.com/article-1213820548>, 2008

**10.6.2    SPONSORING NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY EVENTS**

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	••	••

**Definition:** Airports can make small cash contributions or help host charitable events, by offering the use of empty hangar space that can be turned into the venue for such events.

There are many good causes to support—education, health care, housing, the environment, and others—that, with the proper attention, build strong communities. Non-profit organizations that spearhead many of these

causes rely on the business and civic groups within the communities they serve to provide support. Airport sponsorships provide publicity for the airport and build community support. They also get people to the airport who might not otherwise visit.

### 10.6.3 VOLUNTEERING

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	•	•

**Definition:** There are many volunteer opportunities where airport staff can get involved. They are available during the holiday season and year round. Sometimes the opportunities to get involved reach further a field. For example, many airports rallied to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. Apart from building community support, volunteering helps build team spirit among the airport staff.

### 10.6.4 BOARD PARTICIPATION

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	•	•

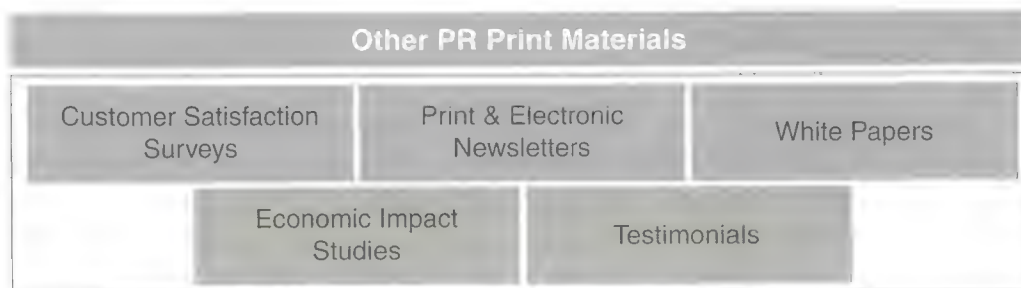
**Definition:** Board participation involves representation by airport managers on non-profit boards. Many community non-profit organizations need community representation on their boards.

This is yet another way for airport managers to get involved in the community. It is also a great way to build relationships with business people, educators, and civic leaders who also choose to serve. It can be time consuming, but very rewarding work.

## 10.7 OTHER PUBLIC RELATIONS MATERIALS

There are other types of public relations materials that airports commonly use to support their marketing efforts. They include customer satisfaction surveys, print (and electronic) newsletters, economic impact studies, testimonials, and white papers (see Exhibit 10.12).

**Exhibit 10.12—Other Public Relations Print Materials.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 10.7.1 CUSTOMER AND TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	•	•

**Definition:** Customer and tenant satisfaction surveys are used both to provide realistic feedback to airport managers and to highlight the benefits of the local airport. As noted, many small airports acknowledge their value, but have not conducted surveys.

Surveys have the benefit of providing objective evidence of the degree to which customers and tenants value the services and facilities offered by the airport. Surveys can also provide ideas for airport improvements. There are a variety of ways to conduct surveys, including free online survey tools that allow you to set up questions, distribute the survey, and tabulate the results.

### 10.7.2 PRINT AND ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$	••	••

**Definition:** Some airports use email newsletters to get out their message. Others publish print newsletters, which are more expensive because of printing and mailing costs.

Many airports publish an electronic version of their newsletter on the airport website. Those interested in receiving a copy via email can make a request on the website. Other ways to assemble a distribution list would include collecting email contact information during airport events. Airports can also request contact lists from other civic organizations. Typically though, the airport would have to invite individuals to receive the newsletter via an email and ask for a return email with a request to “subscribe” or “unsubscribe.”

These methods work well to communicate with travelers who already know about and are interested in the airport. However, because of the difficulty in compiling comprehensive email lists, email newsletters usually are not an effective way to reach potential travelers or customers who are not already interested in the airport.

### 10.7.3 ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDIES

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	•	••

**Definition:** Economic impact studies estimate the economic contributions to the community of a particular airport. They are typically posted on the airport website, summarized as part of the airport’s marketing brochure, or issued as a stand-alone document.

These studies are used to persuade public officials, business leaders, and news media to support the local airport. Usually, they are an element of larger campaigns to engage the local community. When printed as brochures, they may serve as the cornerstone of an airport's press kit or printed media.

These studies are often funded by the FAA and state DOTs. If a state has not sponsored this type of study or the last study is out-of-date, airports can contract with consultants or a university to prepare a report. The American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) also sells use of a model to estimate the economic impact of general aviation airports.

Exhibit 10.13 is an example of an economic impact brochure prepared by the State of Colorado for a small general aviation airport, Central Colorado Regional Airport in Buena Vista, Colorado.

#### Exhibit 10.13—Excerpt for Economic Impact Brochure.



Source: Colorado Airports Economic Impact Study 2008

### 10.7.4 TESTIMONIALS

#### Effectiveness

Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	••	••

**Definition:** Testimonials are positive statements that come from satisfied passengers, pilots, tenants, and friends of the airport. These can and should be used across all forms of promotional materials and advertising.

Testimonials work and carry great weight when promoting the airport to airlines or to potential passengers that are using other nearby airports (see Exhibit 10.14).

#### Exhibit 10.14—Sample Testimonial from Region of Waterloo International Airport, Breslau Canada.

"I would just like to take a minute to tell you what a great experience it was to fly from Waterloo Airport a couple of weeks ago. My wife and I flew to Mexico from there and it was such a treat to not have to drive to Toronto and deal with the traffic. The staff was very professional and everything from boarding to Customs on the return was smooth and enjoyable. I hope this continues as we take a trip at least once a year. All the best!!!!"

Dean Dajko @ Webplas Inc., Custom Injection Molding



"Getting off the plane, through customs, getting our luggage and home in about 30 min was the best. I can only hope that others who have the same good experience let you know. Thanks again!"

Lori Kelly

Source: Region of Waterloo International Airport

### 10.7.5 WHITE PAPERS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$	•	•

**Definition:** "White papers" cover a broad category of general issue papers written to further a specific airport goal. They may cover the issues surrounding a particular development project, sensitive noise issues, changes in air service, and so forth. They are a broad category of promotional material that is called upon in special circumstances.

White papers are used to promote the airport's position, but are generally written in a thoughtful and analytical style. Frequently, they are written with the goal of generating earned media.

# CHAPTER 11

## ADVERTISING TOOLS

- 11.1 Types of Advertising Tools
- 11.2 Print Media
- 11.3 Signage
- 11.4 Multi-Media: Radio, Television, and Video
- 11.5 Internet and Website Tools

### 11.1 TYPES OF ADVERTISING TOOLS

Advertising tools are distinguished from public relations tools in that they are designed, paid for, and placed by the advertising sponsor. Advertising is so pervasive in our everyday lives that we are all good critics about whether a particular advertisement is appealing and works to influence behavior in the intended manner.

Airports are relative newcomers in the advertising world. Advertising has always taken place inside terminals at airports and in industry and local publications, but only in the past 10 to 15 years have airports begun to strategically place ads outside the airport. One of the first bold advertising campaigns occurred when airports placed billboards near neighboring airports to recruit passengers to use their airport instead. Since then, advertising outside of the airport has become common.

For discussion purposes, advertising tools are grouped and described in Exhibit 11.1.

**Exhibit 11.1—Scope of Advertising Tools.**



Source: Oliver Wyman

- **Internet and website tools**—including the airport website, as well as email distributions, and Internet advertising.
- **Print media**—including print ads in newspapers, magazines, and trade journals; direct mail pieces (e.g., post cards, flyers, etc.) sent out to targeted audiences; glossy marketing brochures that feature the airport; airport business cards and stationery that include its brand (e.g., logo, tagline, etc.); and testimonials or written statements from customers and colleagues that are used to promote the airport through all forms of print media.



- **Signage**—including (1) billboards and large posters; (2) banners, flags and awnings; and, (3) display signage. Advertising expense correlates with size of the signage. Bigger is more expensive.
- **Multi-media**—includes radio, television, and video.

## 11.2 PRINT MEDIA

Many airports already effectively use print media to advertise the airport, air service, and various airport sponsored activities. Print media most often used include the following:

- Print ads in newspapers, magazines, and trade journals
- Direct mail pieces (e.g., post cards, flyers, etc.) sent out to targeted audiences
- Marketing brochures

Exhibit 11.2 shows the basic print media on the basis of cost. Actual costs are not provided because they vary widely by market. Nearly all forms of advertising cost far more in major markets than in smaller markets. Nevertheless, in all markets, there is a general hierarchy of costs that airport managers should consider in selecting advertising.

With print material, the cost will also vary depending on the quality of the paper used (weight and grade), whether the piece is printed in color or black and white, the number of photos or images embedded in the piece, the length of the piece, and the quantities produced.

**Exhibit 11.2—Cost of Print Media.**



Source: Oliver Wyman

### 11.2.1 PRINT ADS

Tool	Cost	Effectiveness	
		Commercial Service	General Aviation
Newspaper Ad	\$-\$\$\$	•••	•
Magazine Ad	\$-\$\$\$	•	•
Trade Journal Ad	\$-\$\$	•	••-•••

**Definition:** Print ads run in newspapers, magazines, and trade journals for a predetermined frequency and period of time to (1) promote the airport and its products and services, (2) to announce a new airport feature or service, or (3) to encourage its targeted audiences to behave in a certain way.

Commercial service airports generally find newspaper advertising to be the most effective form of print advertising because it appeals to a wide target audience (see Exhibit 11.3). General aviation airports, however, typically do not find newspaper advertising to be effective, but sometimes do find that advertising in trade journals is effective.

**Exhibit 11.3—Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport, Minnesota Air Service Advertisement.**

I'D RATHER SEARCH FOR  
WALLEYES THAN AN  
AIRPORT PARKING SPOT.

Ted Takasaki, CEO  
Indy-4-rite Joe, Inc.

**BRAINERD LAKES  
REGIONAL AIRPORT**

**FLY BRAINERD**  
**More Flights.**  
**Less Stress.**  
**Free Parking.**

Airport parking ramps add considerable time and expense to business travel. And lugging bags and briefcases has a way of ruining your day before it gets started. With dependable Northwest Airlines flights to and from Minneapolis/St. Paul Int'l Airport everyday, we'll help you ramp-up without the ramps.

Source: Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport 2006

## 11.2.2 DIRECT MAIL

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$-\$\$\$	•	•

**Definition:** Direct mail is a form of print advertising that is delivered directly to the potential airport customers. It is often used as part of a specific campaign, such as announcing a new service, or to create “top of mind” awareness about the airport. Direct mail is usually delivered to businesses and homes by regular U.S. mail service (see Exhibit 11.4).

Today, email has replaced some direct mail. It is less expensive to produce and send. However, because of spam filters, it is not possible to know if the email has reached its intended audience. Highly polished direct mail appears to be making a comeback, although it remains very costly for most airports unless it is shipped with other mailings. For example, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania included a specific airport direct mail insert as part of the vehicle registration renewal letters sent to over one million Pennsylvanians.

## Exhibit 11.4—Fly Lansing Direct Mail Campaign.



Source: Capital Region International Airport, Lansing, Michigan

## 11.2.3 MARKETING BROCHURES

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$\$	••	•••

**Definition:** Marketing brochures are a traditional and commonly used print tool that highlights the advantages of the airport, such as its convenient location, modern facilities, and available services. Brochures can take on many forms, for example, a single fact sheet, a bi-fold or tri-fold piece, or a full booklet. Electronic versions of brochures are now frequently loaded onto an airport's website.

The quality of the materials that are used to produce a marketing brochure can vary. An airport can select the type and weight of paper, the number of print colors, and the images and photographs to be used in the brochure.

Marketing brochures can be used as a direct mail piece, as a handout at a tradeshow or meeting, or as a display item at the airport, in a travel agency, or at civic organizations. They are effective in raising awareness of the airport—provided they reach the right audience.

Arnold Palmer Regional Airport in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, prepared a 12-page marketing brochure highlighting the substantial local population, area businesses that generated air travel, the strong local corporate community support, the airport's low costs, and the airport's convenient facilities and customer-friendly services (see Exhibit 11.5). The brochure was distributed and used to obtain support from the business community, travel agents, and local media. It was also used to help persuade Northwest Airlines that Latrobe was a market that meant business.

#### Exhibit 11.5—Arnold Palmer Regional Airport Advertisement.



Source: Arnold Palmer Regional Airport

### 11.2.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR PRINT MEDIA CONTENT

When designing print media, consider the following points about your content:

- Use a consistent message and brand in all print materials so that targeted audiences can easily recognize and remember the airport. Once the hard work of developing the airport's logo, tagline, colors, and graphics is completed, this marketing collateral can be used over and over again, not only in printed advertising, but also on the airport's website.

- Communicate clearly the airport's message.
- Make sure that all print media looks crisp and professional.
- Don't be afraid to be imaginative when developing print ads. Think about different ways the airport's print materials might grab readers' attention. Possibly try using a local celebrity in the print ad to make readers sit up and take notice. Humor and catchy phrases also often work well.
- Ask for testimonials from satisfied customers immediately after a good experience. Testimonials are free and very effective. All you have to do is ask.
- Give the brand time to work. Exposure is also important when using print media. Get the airport's brand out in front of its target audiences as much as possible and give it time to work.
- Plan to bundle and sequence printed material in an advertising campaign. Think of creative ways to combine the print media such as a business card included within the marketing brochure or sequence the campaign by running an advertisement in the local newspaper and then follow up with a direct mail campaign.

Exhibit 11.6 shows a photograph used by Longmont's Vance Brand Municipal Airport to call attention to the skydiving activities at the airport.

**Exhibit 11.6—Skydivers at Longmont Vance Brand Airport.**



Source: Longmont Vance Brand Municipal Airport

### 11.2.5 TIPS FOR MANAGING THE COST OF PRINT MEDIA

Print media can get expensive. Here are the factors that will influence your total expense for a particular print advertisement:

- Black and white or color (and how many colors?)
- Size of print media
- Number of photos
- Quantity printed or run rate (for an ad)
- Position or placement of the ad in the publication
- Graphic artist time

## FOR PRINT ADS—GET A RATE SHEET!

---

When pricing print ads that will run in newspapers or magazines, the first step is to request a “rate sheet” from the publisher. The rate sheet lists the prices for advertisements by size of ad and the discount rate if multiple ads are purchased. Often a publisher will negotiate a rate. Also, consider less expensive places to advertise such as newsletters published by professional groups, chamber of commerce publications, or local newspapers or weeklies. The size of the ad will also impact price, with larger ads costing more. However, the tradeoff is “the bigger the ad, the bigger the impact.”

## CONSIDER JOINT MARKETING WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS OR SUPPLIERS

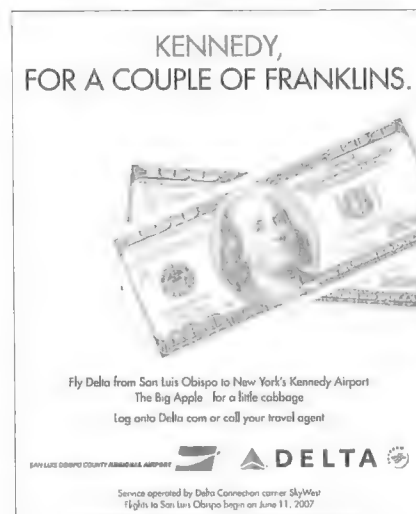
---

It is also common for communities to jointly market with their airlines, FBOs, or fuel suppliers. This is probably the most effective way to save on graphics costs especially when advertising with or on behalf of the airlines because airlines typically require their graphics department to prepare the ads no matter who is paying for them. Many airports have persuaded airlines to add airport information and branding messages to ads, which can be an effective way to market jointly.

The following ads were jointly sponsored by a community and an airline. Exhibit 11.7 shows the first ad that was co-sponsored by San Luis Obispo Regional Airport and Delta Airlines. This is a customized ad to promote the new service. The second ad was prepared by the Northwest Airlines advertising department, but the placement of the ad was paid for by the City of St. Cloud, Minnesota (see Exhibit 11.8).

### Exhibit 11.7—San Luis Obispo Regional Airport and Delta Airlines Advertisement.

---



Source: Co-sponsored by San Luis Obispo Regional Airport and Delta Airlines, prepared by Sixel Consulting Group

### Exhibit 11.8—St. Cloud Regional Airport and Northwest Airlines Joint Advertisement.

---

© 2002 Northwest Airlines, Inc.

**More service  
from St. Cloud to  
Minneapolis/St. Paul  
and the world.**

Northwest Airlines® has expanded  
its service from St. Cloud to  
Minneapolis/St. Paul International  
Airport. Now, enjoy the convenience  
of six daily roundtrip flights during  
the week and five on weekends.  
More seats, less travel time  
and free parking. At Northwest  
we give you more ways to  
connect to nearly 900 cities  
in almost 160 countries on  
six continents. For further  
details, visit [nwa.com](http://nwa.com)®,  
call your travel agent, or  
call 1-800-225-2525  
today.

**ST. CLOUD**  
REGIONAL AIRPORT

[nwa.com](http://nwa.com)

**nwa**  
NORTHWEST AIRLINES®

---

Source: Co-sponsored by the City of St. Cloud and Northwest Airlines

### FOR DIRECT MAIL—TARGET THE AUDIENCE/GET VOLUNTEERS TO PREPARE THE MAILER

---

The price of direct mail includes the cost to produce the mailer (e.g., postcard, flyer, etc.), the cost to actually get the pieces mailed, and the cost of purchasing a mailing list, if you choose to do so. The actual mailing can be done in house or, if volume warrants, through a company that provides mailing services.

### BROCHURES, BUSINESS CARDS, STATIONERY REQUIRE DESIGN AND PRINTING ESTIMATES

---

The price to produce a marketing brochure varies greatly depending on the quality and quantity being produced. For many airports, this is the single most important marketing material used by the airport, so it should have a professional look and feel; include the airport's logo, colors, and graphics; and communicate the airport's message. Costs will also vary depending on whether an outside graphic artist and printing company are used to design and print the brochure or whether the brochure is developed in-house and then printed as needed using a high quality color printer.

Business cards and stationery are relatively inexpensive to design and print. To ensure a professional look, business cards in particular should be printed using an outside printing shop.

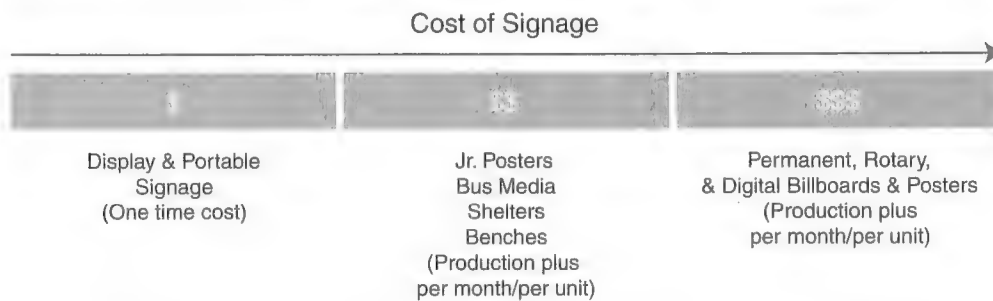
### 11.3 SIGNAGE

Signage presents the opportunity to promote the airport brand and message beyond the airport at predetermined locations. (Signs on moving vehicles are the exception to this rule.) There are three main types of signage that can be used to promote the airport:

- Outdoor advertising
- Portable banners, flags, and awnings
- Meeting or convention displays

Exhibit 11.9 displays the main forms of signage on the basis of cost. (Section 11.3.5 contains a more complete description of signage cost issues.) As with other forms of media, actual costs are not provided because they vary widely by market.

**Exhibit 11.9—Cost of Signage.**



Source: Oliver Wyman

#### 11.3.1 OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

Outdoor advertising includes billboards, posters, digital displays, buses, and shelters and benches (not typically used by airports).

Selection of a particular form of outdoor advertising depends on these considerations:

- What is the airport's budget for advertising?
- Who is the target audience?
- What are the best ways to reach this audience?
- Is it better to go for one large billboard or several smaller posters? Billboards are the most important type of outdoor advertising and are also the most expensive. Billboards and other outdoor advertising are discussed Sections 11.3.1 and 11.3.2, respectively.



BILLBOARDS

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$-\$\$\$	...	.

**Definition:** Billboards are large advertisements placed outdoors at strategic locations along highways, on exit ramps, and in high density commercial areas. In practice, billboards are more often used by commercial service airports than by general aviation airports because they target a very large audience.

When placed in the right locations, billboards have the advantage of reaching a large percentage of travelers. Often, they are placed along the highways that local residents take to reach a larger out-of-town airport.

Billboards are particularly effective at raising awareness of the existence of the local airport and of the services offered. They are often used to help reduce leakage of passengers to other airports in the region.

Because drivers only glance at billboards momentarily, they must carry short messages. Also, because billboards are of long duration, they are typically not used to advertise specific fares or other information that changes frequently. The main drawback of traditional billboards is that they are expensive, both to pay for the billboard location and the development costs for design and printing of the billboard itself.

Billboards are used to make a general statement about the convenience of the local airport, as shown in Exhibit 11.10:

Exhibit 11.10—Harrisburg International Airport Billboard.



Source: Harrisburg International Airport

Or billboards may provide information about a specific service as shown in Exhibit 11.11.

**Exhibit 11.11—Lehigh Valley International Airport Billboard.**

Source: Lehigh Valley International Airport

**OTHER OUTDOOR ADVERTISING**

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$-\$\$\$	••-•••	•

**Definition:** There are a variety of other outdoor advertising tools. Posters are basically smaller versions of billboards, and junior posters are even small versions designed for urban areas and foot traffic. Sometimes if saturation is the goal, well-placed posters in a downtown area or signs on buses can also convey the message effectively.

Digital displays, which are replacing some traditional billboards, offer the capability of making inexpensive changes in message. Sometimes, they are also less expensive than traditional billboards because they carry multiple advertisements with any single ad showing for 10 seconds at a time.

Each of these media addresses certain audiences as Exhibit 11.12 describes. Posters, billboards, and digital displays are all suitable for airport advertising.

**Exhibit 11.12—Outdoor Advertising Matrix.**

Type	Typical Overall Sizes	Location	Uses	Production	Relative Cost
Billboards	10'6" X 36' 10' X 40' 14' X 48'	Expressways or Main Arteries	High visual impact to large groups of people. Two types of billboards: permanent or rotary (Rotary billboards are moved every 2 or 3 months)	Digitally produced on heavy gauge vinyl	Most expensive to produce and display. Geographic region and actual location determine cost
Posters	12' X 24'	Same	Target special groups, saturation strategy	Same	Same

(continued)

Type	Typical Overall Sizes	Location	Uses	Production	Relative Cost
Jr. Poster	6' X 12'	Close to street level, urban areas, foot traffic	Time sensitive, seasonal, special events, get out the word, flood the market	Digitally produced on paper or vinyl	Low cost per thousand
Digital Displays	Same as Billboards and Posters	Same as Billboards and Posters	10 second message on billboard type display	Graphics prepared and sent via email/no paper or vinyl/easy to change	Graphics design but no production costs
Bus Displays	Varied	Buses	Brand building, repeat messaging, good substitute for television	Digitally produced on paper or vinyl	Low cost per thousand

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 11.3.2 PORTABLE BANNERS, FLAGS, AND AWNINGS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$	•-••	•-••

**Definition:** Portable signs are signs with messages and graphics printed on cloth that can come in different shapes and sizes; usually as a flag, banner, or awning. They can be flexibly used both inside and outside and, because they are light weight, they are portable and reusable. They can be displayed in many ways (e.g., attached to a wall, suspended from a ceiling, draped over a table, etc.).

### 11.3.3 MEETING OR CONVENTION DISPLAYS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$	•-••	•-••

**Definition:** Display signage pertains to the graphics and messages incorporated into displays such as a tabletop, pedestal, or booth used for tradeshow, conventions, or conferences. The reason to exhibit at one of these events is typically to raise awareness about the airport, promote development opportunities, and attract prospective tenants or transient pilots.

The exhibit location at the larger conventions is very important. Some states purchase large exhibit space and individual airports from the state share the space. Full-fledged booths are expensive, so make sure that the return on investment is acceptable before choosing this option. The companies that make trade show booths offer many other kinds of smaller-scale options such as pedestals or tabletop displays. This approach coupled with portable media is an affordable combination.

### 11.3.4 COST OF SIGNAGE

For all signage, there are four cost components, assuming that the brand and messages are already in place:

1. Artistic direction, placement negotiation, oversight
2. Graphic design
3. Production of actual media
4. Placement (location), frequency, and/or duration

The cost to place outdoor advertising, such as a billboard, varies widely. The specific location of the billboard is a driving factor in monthly rents. Rents for billboards along major freeways in large cities will cost more than rents along lesser traveled highways in smaller communities. Similar to print ads, the cost for outdoor signage also varies by the size, with larger signs costing more than smaller signs. Exhibit 11.13 shows 2008 rates provided by Lamar Advertising Company.

**Exhibit 11.13—Sample of 2008 Monthly Costs for Outdoor Advertising.**

Sample Markets	Population over 18	Jr. Poster	Posters	Billboards	Digital Displays	
Typical Overall Sizes		5' × 11'	10.5' × 22.8'	14' × 48'	14' × 48'	10.5' × 22.8'
Altoona, PA	99,862	\$180	\$793	\$2,300		\$2,000
St. Cloud, MN	138,158	Not available	\$705	\$2,500		\$3,100
Corpus Christi, TX	425,000	\$170	\$675	\$2,354	\$5,350	
Youngstown, OH	433,973	\$320	\$1,052	\$4,110		\$1,800
Bakersfield, CA	510,300	\$238	\$1,047	\$4,280		\$8,025
Chicago, IL	5,188,500	Not available	\$1,070	\$9,630	\$12,000	

Source: Lamar Advertising Company

The cost for portable signs such as flags, banners, and awnings can be very reasonable. There are a number of companies that specialize in making custom-designed flags and banners. They can also supply the hardware required to display these signs. Price will depend on the specific materials used for the sign as well as the size of the sign.

Display costs vary widely, and can be quite expensive. Factors impacting the cost of a display include the type of display, its size, specific features or attributes of the display, and graphics chosen for the display. Contact one or two display companies in your area to obtain a detailed list of options and their prices.

The following are ways to save money when using signs:

- Preparation of the graphics
  - If jointly advertising with other groups (e.g., chamber of commerce, airline, or supplier) investigate their graphics department as a lower cost option to develop the graphics.
- Outdoor Advertising
  - Always negotiate the price of placement of an outdoor advertisement. There may be a special government rate or public service rate.
  - Know who the audience is and where to reach them. Advertising companies have multiple locations. Evaluate visibility against price. Do not settle for an inferior location that is cheaper unless the visibility is satisfactory for the target audience.
  - Compare the cost of producing a vinyl billboard with the cost of a digital display if one is available in the area.
- Trade Shows
  - Evaluate the cost of exhibit space.
  - Consider sharing a larger space with other airports in the state.
  - Partner with the chamber of commerce, other economic development groups in your region, FBO, or fuel supplier.
  - Rent exhibit structures rather than purchase them if exhibiting at conventions outside the area.
  - Use portable signage and display items that can be reused.

### 11.3.5 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT SIGNAGE

Signage can be a very effective way to promote the airport. As with print ads, signage should incorporate the airport's brand. Messages should be crisp and clear, and exposure is key. Some experts say that a billboard should have no more than six or seven words. Get the airport's brand out in front of its target audiences as much as possible and give the brand time to work. If billboards are part of the campaign, make sure they are strategically placed to be viewed by the airport's target audiences. Reach and frequency goals should be met.

*Reminder: Use a consistent message and design in all airport signs.*

- Keep the images and messages simple for outdoor signage.
- Incorporate an entertaining, lasting "hook."
- Use the airport's tagline or logo in the signage to increase airport awareness and recognition.

Seriously consider using portable signage as part of the airport's marketing strategy. Once these signs have been developed and purchased, they can be used effectively in a multitude of ways over time.

As is true with print ads, do not be afraid to be imaginative when developing signage. Think about different ways these signs might grab the viewer's attention. Use them to deliver messages that promote the airport's image and goals. Look at examples to spark new, fresh ideas.

Think twice before purchasing an expensive permanent booth. Make sure that exhibiting at a tradeshow will deliver the results that the airport is striving to achieve. Choose tradeshow that the airport's target audience also attends. Do not just show up at the tradeshow, but rather "work" the tradeshow. Have specific goals in mind, schedule important prospecting meetings in advance, have a means to collect contact information from leads generated at the event, and know how you plan to follow up after the tradeshow is over.

Outdoor advertising and signage is big business. Today, many of the companies that own billboards also have graphics design and production departments. Advertising agencies will coordinate every aspect of an advertising campaign and in fact many airports already have agencies under contract. It is also possible to partner with the chamber of commerce, airlines, FBOs and other airport tenants to jointly produce and pay for signage.

#### 11.4 MULTI-MEDIA: RADIO, TELEVISION AND VIDEO

Radio and television spots are among the most common forms of advertising in the United States, but because of their expense to produce and place the ads, airports typically use radio and television sparingly, except as public service announcements on community cable television. However, with the availability of new high quality hand-held digital equipment, video has become a more cost-effective alternative and a popular new form of advertising when combined with technology known as website video streaming (see Exhibit 11.14). These types of advertising are briefly described in the following subsections.

##### Exhibit 11.14—Video Webcam at Jefferson County International Airport.



Source: Jefferson County International Airport, operated by the Port of Port Townsend, Washington 2009

## 11.4.1 RADIO ADVERTISING

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$	○	●

**Definition:** Radio advertising has the ability to reach a large audience.

The stakes for radio ads are high, however, because not only is the message critical, but its placement and frequency are also of equal importance. For example, radio ads targeted at business travelers are typically run during rush hour commute times. Also, because most radio listeners have heard thousands of advertisements, the ads need to be of high quality to retain their listeners' interest.

Small commercial service airports are divided in their opinion as to the effectiveness of radio advertising. Some have found it to be effective, while others have not. General aviation airports typically do not rely on radio advertising.

The following are tips for successful radio advertising:

- The most effective radio ads call for direct action (encouraging the listener to take some form of action) versus indirect action (creating brand awareness).
- Keep the message crisp.
- Put the airport's brand name into the radio ad often, so that if the goal of direct action fails, the airport is still building brand awareness.
- Create specific mental images through the use of words, sound effects, and music (e.g., friendly image) that are aligned with the airport's goals and message.
- Be selective; run radio "spots" on stations and at times the airport's target audiences are most likely to hear them.

## 11.4.2 TELEVISION ADVERTISING

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$\$\$	●●●	●

**Definition:** Television advertising has the ability to reach a large audience with one advertisement. However, for most airports, television advertising is likely to be beyond their budget. General aviation airports typically do not rely on television advertising.

The following are tips for successful television advertising:

- Make sure television ads are the best use of the airport's marketing funds because these ads are expensive.
- Hire an expert to produce the advertisement.

- Use the power of visual imagery and audio to elicit specific emotions from viewers.
- Run television spots where the airport's target audiences are most likely to see them.

### 11.4.3 DIGITAL VIDEO

Cost	Effectiveness	
	Commercial Service	General Aviation
Cost \$\$	••	•

**Definition:** Video, when shot in digital format, is a popular way to advertise because it allows for streaming video messages on a website. The same video message can be displayed on television screens and computers, making it a powerful and versatile marketing tool. This technology when combined with the reach of the Internet offers a variety of marketing applications.

Here are a few ways that airports currently use streaming video:

- Webcams of the airport
- Video slide shows or movies with narration showing different aspects of the airport or new development projects used for marketing prospects, at trade shows, or on websites
- Video ads or banners on linked websites
- Video interviews on airport websites
- Airport air shows or other special events

### 11.4.4 COST OF MULTI-MEDIA

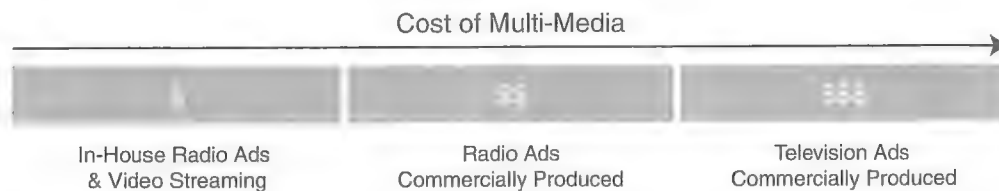
Radio and television advertising involves some of the same cost components as print media and signage:

- Artistic direction, placement negotiation, oversight
- Script development
- Recruitment and cost of actors
- Production of actual media
- Placement (location), frequency, and/or duration

With increases in computing power and PC video capabilities, video has high potential for in-house production and low cost airport advertising.

*Tip: For video production assistance, university or college film students might be interested in helping with an airport video project.*



**Exhibit 11.15—Cost of Multi-Media.**

Source: Oliver Wyman

Radio production costs can be very inexpensive if they are developed in-house. They are more expensive if done by a production company. The basic components of radio production include writing a script and then recording the script and sound effects. Radio ads are typically sold as 30-second spots.

Television ads are much more expensive to produce and broadcast. Again, a script is required that includes sound and visual imagery that is roughed-out using a storyboard. If a television ad is part of the airport's campaign, we recommend using a production company that can assist in putting together a professional looking and effective television ad. However, videos can be made inexpensively in-house with the use of digital video equipment that can either be purchased or rented. Exhibit 11.15 displays the relative cost of these various forms of advertising.

The cost to air a radio or television ad is highly variable and negotiable. If the airport is placing its own ads, there are websites on the Internet that estimate radio and television advertising rates by state, by city, and by radio or television station. These are good starting points for any direct negotiations with a station.

## 11.5 INTERNET AND WEBSITE TOOLS

Internet and website technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace as new advertising and marketing applications are introduced. The Internet provides airports with a very inexpensive and effective means to advertise (see Exhibit 11.16). With an interesting and current website, airports can reach a very large audience. In fact, some airports use all their advertising to direct people back to their website. Also, it is easy to create reciprocal links on other websites that will take Internet users immediately to the airport's website. Airports can also communicate effectively with specific groups by sending e-blasts via email.

This section focuses on the basic ways for airports to make good use of the Internet:

1. Develop a stand-alone website.
2. Establish reciprocal links to/from other related websites of interest to your users.
3. Optimize search engine visibility to increase the airport's position and presence on the Internet.
4. Try video streaming to advertise the airport and make the website visually exciting.
5. Use e-newsletters, e-blasts, and rich site summary (RSS) feed to communicate with target groups.

**Exhibit 11.16—Internet Opportunities.**

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

**11.5.1 AIRPORT WEBSITE**

	Effectiveness		
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation	Essential Tool ☆
\$-\$\$\$	...	...	

**Definition:** Airport websites may be thought of either as (1) an electronic marketing brochure or (2) as a content-driven public service or advertising tool.

If a website serves as a brochure, it is like an extended business card, containing basic information about the airport, its facilities, location, purpose, and contact information. This is the simplest form of website that an airport can create in-house or with the help of an intern or the local college. The maintenance required for this type of site is low and its utility as an advertising tool is also minimal. Every airport should at least have this type of presence on the Internet.

Websites that are content driven raise the bar of opportunity and overhead because they must also be maintained. If the airport intends to use its website for any of the following reasons: (1) as a principal channel of public information; (2) to publish schedules and flight status; or (3) to competitively position the airport, then this is a more complex and expensive website to create and keep current.

Since the general public has become sophisticated Internet users, a stand-alone content-driven website is an excellent and cost-effective way to advertise the airport.

**11.5.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR AIRPORT ADVERTISING ON THE INTERNET**

- Infuse websites with interesting content. Add or rotate visuals, videos, and information.
- Keep your website accurate and current.
- Internet advertising presents the opportunity to reinforce the airport brand and messages through use of logo, color, and taglines.
- Obtain permission from recipients before sending e-blasts, e-newsletters, or RSS feed.

- Separate the airport website from city or county websites. If your airport uses its website to deliver content, it is important that the website be available and not buried as a department within the local government website. As a stand-alone website, viewers can easily locate it with an Internet search engine and one click.

### 11.5.3 REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTRACTING VISITORS TO THE WEBSITE

Small airport websites are not a natural destination for many Internet users, so it is important to think of ways to make travelers, general aviation pilots, and others want to use the local airport site. For example, these sites can become a destination if there is a contest that requires a visit or if the site contains important real-time information. Some commercial airports report arrivals and departures of aircraft, wait times to clear security, and parking availability on a real-time basis.

Smaller airport websites frequently post news about new service, airport construction, airport business opportunities, and links to airport-related businesses, such as rental cars and hotels. General aviation sites can post fuel prices and event announcements. The idea is to think of useful or interesting information that can be found only on the airport website, or can be found most easily there so that the airport website becomes a regular site for the user to visit.

Pennsylvania developed a program called IFlyPA, which used billboards, luggage tags, radio commercials, and over a million stuffers in auto registration renewals to encourage travelers to check the website, which in turn linked to local airports (see Exhibit 11.17).

#### Exhibit 11.17—IFlyPA Promotion.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, <http://www.iflypa.com>

In summary, the need to raise awareness of the airport's website can be as much of a challenge as the need to raise awareness of the airport, and many of the same techniques are required. In addition, once the Internet user tries the airport website, he or she may not return if the original visit is a disappointment. Airport websites are both an important marketing tool and a tool that needs to be marketed.

### 11.5.4 GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR WEBSITE

It is important to decide at the beginning what type of website the airport will have and what resources are available to maintain it. Many airports use the local college or their existing advertising agency to create a website. Here are a few tips.

- **Domain Name.** If you are establishing a stand-alone website for the first time, the airport will need a domain name or Internet address. Simplicity works. Go for the airport name or three letter airport code. Go to an Internet domain register site such as Register.com or GoDaddy.com and confirm that your name is unique. Get the domain name registered.
- **Internet Host.** Contact the city or county IT department to find out who hosts its website. The airport can probably use the same company.
- **Basic Website Content.** Brainstorm about content. Look at other airport websites. Basic information includes the following:
  - Description of the airport facilities and location
  - Services and amenities
  - Directory of businesses on the airport
  - Lease or development opportunities
  - Rates and charges.
  - Minimum standards
  - Contact information
- **Additional Website Content.** The following list contains additional content for the website:
  - Air service schedules
  - Flight status
  - Links to air carriers serving the airport
  - Press kit and press releases
  - Video streaming content (e.g., about the airport or development opportunities)
  - E-newsletters
  - Statistics
  - Financial reports
  - Testimonials

Exhibits 11.18 and 11.19 show two examples of home pages for airports. There are many other good ones. Chandler Municipal Airport's website is embedded in the city's website. It is a good example of a brochure type website with good content and several pages of linked information. Although considerable effort went into the development of the website, most of the content will stay current for awhile. This will reduce the regular maintenance requirements necessary for a website that displays real-time information and rotating content.

**Exhibit 11.18—Website for Chandler Municipal Airport, Arizona.**

**WELCOME TO Chandler**  
THE OFFICIAL CITY WEB SITE FOR CHANDLER, ARIZONA

HOME CITY HALL CITY NEWS DESK CUSTOMER SERVICES LEISURE & LIFESTYLE OUR COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY TRANSPORTATION

## Chandler Municipal Airport

Located in the southeastern portion of Metropolitan Phoenix, Chandler Municipal Airport represents an outstanding opportunity for growth and offers a convenient alternative to corporate aircraft owners.

With more than 260,000 operations each year, it is among the nation's 50 busiest general aviation airports and delivers an annual economic impact of more than \$53 million to Arizona's economy.<sup>30</sup>

Chandler Municipal Airport contributes greatly to the local economy by providing jobs, corporate access to southwestern U.S. markets, access to air transportation services and facilities to house aviation-related businesses.

**Comments & Concerns**

- Perfect year-round flying weather
- Dual parallel runways, 4,870 feet and 4,401 feet
- FAA Contract Control Tower
- Outstanding Business Environment

**PILOTS**

- Runways
- Important Links/Numbers
- Tower
- Aircraft Parking

**NEIGHBORS**

- About the Airport
- Noise Study
- Maps/Downloads
- Comments/Concerns

**BUSINESSES**

- Airpark
- Development Opportunities
- Maps
- Master Plan/Studies/Downloads

**Contact Chandler Airport**  
Phone: 480.782.3540  
Fax: 480.782.3541

**Noise**  
Noise Events Hotline: 480.782.3550  
Comments/Concerns

**Chandler Airport Mailing Address**  
Terminal & Administration Offices  
2380 S. Stinson Way  
Chandler, AZ 85286

7/20/2009 Search | Site Map | Contact Chandler | Accessibility | Privacy Policy | Help

Source: City of Chandler, Municipal Airport, <http://www.chandleraz.gov/default.aspx?pageid=318>

The second example is Natrona County International Airport in Casper, Wyoming. Casper serves as the second largest airport in Wyoming, and the Casper website offers a current schedule of daily departures. The website also provides direct links to airline, car rental, and hotel reservation sites.

## Exhibit 11.19—Natrona County International Airport Website.

**Flight Information** **Airport Services** **Business Park** **Facility Rentals** **News** **Community** **Gallery** **ARFF Training**

**Casper/Natrona County**

**Home** **Administration** **Contact**

### AIRPORT NEWS

February 17, 2009  
CONGRATULATIONS NATRONA COUNTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...[read more](#)

February 3, 2009  
AIRPORT RECEIVES DELIVERY OF NEW AIRCRAFT RESCUE FIREFIGHTING (ARFF) VEHICLE...[read more](#)

December 11, 2008  
AIRPORT RECEIVES STATE AIR SERVICE AND MARKETING GRANT...[read more](#)

**Casper Area Economic Development Alliance, Inc.**  
[www.casperworks.biz](http://www.casperworks.biz)

**RAMKOTA HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER**  
Casper, Wyoming  
**Great Rates: 307-266-6000**

**PARKWAY PLAZA**  
HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER

Come join us for a cold one before your flight  
**The Sky Terrace Lounge**  
next to Charlie T's in the terminal

### SERVING CENTRAL WYOMING

Welcome to the Casper/Natrona County International Airport (C/NCIA), the Gateway to Wyoming! Located in the geographical center of the state, C/NCIA serves the air transportation needs of passengers from around Wyoming.

#### ARRIVALS

United Express	7107	9:34 am	DEN	daily
Northwest	2184	11:25 am	SEA	daily
Delta	4380	1:00 pm	SLC	Mon - Sat
United Express	7107	1:04 pm	DEN	daily
United Express	7111	1:41 pm	DEN	Sun - Fri
Delta	4381	1:45 pm	SLC	daily
Allegiant	8001	1:55 pm	LAS	Thu & Sun
United Express	7111	10:38 pm	DEN	Mon - Sat
Delta	4381	10:20 pm	SLC	daily

#### DEPARTURES

United Express	7200	6:00 am	DEN	daily
Delta	4781	6:25 am	SLC	daily
United Express	7107	9:53 am	DEN	daily
Northwest	2184	10:50 am	MSP	daily
Delta	4380	1:00 pm	SLC	Sun - Friday
United Express	7107	1:06 pm	DEN	daily
United Express	7111	4:55 pm	DEN	Sun - Friday
Delta	4381	1:20 pm	SLC	daily
Allegiant	8001	8:25 pm	LAS	Thu & Sun

Source: Website prepared by Big Wind Media, Inc., for Casper/Natrona County International Airport, <http://www.iflycasper.com>

### 11.5.5 DYNAMIC AND PASSIVE LINKS ARE IMPORTANT

Links on an airport website can provide direct access to the following:

1. Airline reservation systems
2. Weather conditions
3. Flight status

4. Businesses on or off the airport.
5. Other aviation organizations or sources of information

Companies that provide real-time flight tracking displays and current weather conditions typically require subscriptions. Passive links to airlines and travel agencies are arranged by written agreement and are usually free.

There is another direction to links that enable an airport to bring viewers into the website. The idea is to create pathways back to your site by including links on other sites that the airport's audience visits such as the local chamber of commerce or the city's website. Best practice is to offer a reciprocal agreement, that is, you include their link or advertisement on your site and they include your link and banner on their site, as illustrated in Exhibit 11.20. Links have the following important advantages:

- Increase "traffic" into your website
- Improve your website's search engine ranking
- Promote partnership with airport stakeholders
- Are free

**Exhibit 11.20—Examples of Reciprocal Airport Website Links.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 11.5.6 BUYING INTERNET VISIBILITY

Internet visibility is important, and there is a whole industry that supports this highly technical subject. One goal of website design is to make sure that the content is search engine friendly. Most web designers understand how to optimize web content and the HTML code (that drives the website) so that the relevant key words are picked up by search engines. When a new website is launched it is important to measure website traffic. There are methods to collect this information and optimize keywords so that search engines deliver the intended visitors to your website.

It is also possible to purchase higher rankings on all the search engines (and there are many today). However, before purchasing advertising on the Internet, airports would be wiser to first optimize their websites to become search engine friendly as the website is developed or reworked.



### 11.5.7 E-NEWSLETTER, E-BLASTS, AND RSS FEED

E-newsletters, e-blasts, and RSS feed are all ways to communicate with stakeholders, tenants, prospects, and other interested people. Think of these three media as going from the most formal presentation to newsbyte links. Many airports already produce newsletters, press releases, and other streams of information that are published as hard copy, loaded onto a website, or distributed via email or a desktop browser.

**E-newsletters** are electronic versions of 1 to 4 page newsletters typically published monthly or quarterly. They were one of the first formats to go electronic on a website where a visitor could view them on the website or sign up for delivery via email. E-newsletters are the most formal of the electronic communications that airports disseminate. See discussion of print and electronic newsletters in Section 10.7.2.

**E-blasts** are sent via email to a target audience. They are typically limited to a single, important subject that would interest the recipient. For example, suppose the airport began offering free wireless Internet. This news could be broadcast on the website or a special email could be sent out to airport users. If an airport uses e-blasts frequently, it may be important to make special arrangements with the airport's email provider to avoid problems that arise out of mass mailings and spam filters.

**RSS feed** is the newest technology of the three. RSS is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. Many news-related sites, weblogs and airports syndicate their content as an RSS feed to whoever wants it. RSS solves a problem for people who regularly visit several websites. The user subscribes to a feed typically on a website or by clicking an RSS icon in a browser that initiates the subscription process. An RSS reader or browser checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new content, downloading any updates that it finds. Some browsers have feed readers built into them.

Airports are starting to use RSS feed. Exhibit 11.21 contains Centennial Airport's invitation to subscribe.

#### Exhibit 11.21—RSS News Feeds for Centennial Airport, Colorado.

Keep in touch with what's happening at the airport. Get the latest news delivered directly to you via our RSS Feeds.

##### SUBSCRIBE TO OUR FEEDS:

LATEST NEWS

SUBSCRIBE  
Latest News



PILOT NEWS

SUBSCRIBE  
Pilot News



NOISE ABATEMENT NEWS

SUBSCRIBE  
Noise News



Source: Centennial Airport, <http://www.centennialairport.com/~centenn4/News-Feeds>

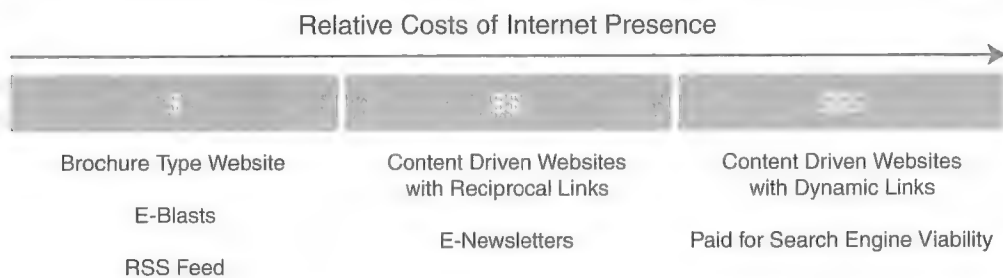


### 11.5.8 WEBSITE COSTS

There are a number of cost components associated with development and maintenance of a website:

1. Domain registration and annual fee
2. Internet host fee
3. Development of the website structure and appearance
4. Website maintenance
5. On-going content development

**Exhibit 11.22—Relative Costs of Internet Presence.**



Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

The cost of a website will vary widely, depending on what the airport decides to accomplish (see Exhibit 11.22). The following are three important questions to ask:

- What is the purpose of the airport website: brochure or dynamic content?
- What resources are available to design and maintain the content or the website?
- What outside resources are required?

# CHAPTER 12

## NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- 12.1 Business, Civic, and Non-Profit Networking Opportunities
- 12.2 Networking with Professional and Industry Organizations
- 12.3 Tradeshows and Conferences
- 12.4 Strategic Partnerships
- 12.5 Lobbying
- 12.6 Contact Managers and Networking Tools

Small airports that are the most effective at marketing do so through on-going networking efforts. Managers of these airports are always meeting with business leaders, community groups, news people, public officials, airlines, tenants and potential tenants, developers, industry groups, and a host of other individuals and organizations. Through this relentless networking, these airport managers succeed in getting out their message and building lasting relationships with stakeholders and advocates of the airport. Much of this networking is either free or low cost. As such, the importance of networking cannot be overstated.

What is networking? It is the art of building alliances and important relationships overtime through various means. We have identified six major networking groups important to airport managers. They are business, civic, and non-profit groups; professional organizations; tradeshows and conferences; strategic partnerships; lobbying; and contact managers and other networking venues.

### 12.1 BUSINESS, CIVIC, AND NON-PROFIT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	...	...

**Definition:** Airports build relationships with business, civic, and non-profit groups because these group reach across the community, representing organizations that have a vested interest in the airport's long-term vitality; they are often champions, volunteers, marketers, and partners of the airport.

Business, civic, and non-profit networking groups are found in almost all communities, regardless of their size. Not all of these specific organizations may be represented in all communities, but most towns will have some combination of the following:

- Chambers of commerce
- Economic development organizations
- Community service groups, such as Rotary, Elks, Masons, Kiwanis
- Universities, colleges, and aviation education
- Youth programs (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Young Eagles)

Some of these organizations have been described in other contexts. For example, airports may sponsor youth programs, and they may use those same programs to help them network with civic leaders and increase the number of airport supporters in the community.

To successfully fulfill their roles, small airports need to market effectively to the local community. Reasons to use networking include the following:

- To continuously remind the community of the airport's value and role in the economic activity of the community.
- To create good will that makes it easier to resolve difficult airport-community issues.
- To build lasting relationships with organizations that have a vested interest in the airport's long-term vitality.
- To recruit champions, volunteers, marketers, and partners of the airport.
- To educate and excite the "next generation" of airport leaders and champions.

### 12.1.1 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Most communities in the United States have a chamber of commerce. Its purpose is to create a strong local economy, promote the community, provide a variety of business networking opportunities, and interface with government on behalf of business.

The range of specific networking activities available through the chamber of commerce varies by community. Some regular events that airport managers can take advantage of include the following:

- Ribbon cutting and grand opening celebrations
- Membership appreciation breakfasts
- Business After Hours socials
- Various volunteer committees
- Chamber of commerce board of directors meetings
- Business classes and training programs
- Advocacy workshops and presentations

Annual dues are collected by the chamber of commerce entitling its members to these networking opportunities, with dues varying by entity.

### 12.1.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Economic development organizations can be found at the national, regional, state, and local level, each with its own particular set of goals and objectives. In this chapter, the emphasis is on local organizations where the focus is on recruitment, expansion, and retention of business (and jobs) in the community. In cases where a community does not have a separate economic development organization, these activities are often handled by the chamber of commerce.

Many airport managers effectively use their local economic development organization to recruit and attract enterprises that could locate on the airport or in an adjacent industrial park.

### 12.1.3 COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUPS

Community service groups such as the Rotary club, Elks, Masons, and Kiwanis are active in most communities. These groups bring together business and professional leaders for community service. The list of projects that these groups undertake is as diverse as it is long.

Rotary describes networking as one of the principal benefits of membership: “an original goal of Rotary was to allow club members to meet periodically and enlarge their circle of business and professional acquaintances. As members of the oldest service club in the world, Rotarians represent a cross-section of their community’s business owners, executives, managers, political leaders, and professionals—people who make decisions and influence policy.”

Specific details about each of these organizations can be found on their respective websites.

### 12.1.4 UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND AVIATION TRAINING PROGRAMS

Many communities have a local college or university that offers training for careers in aviation. Establishing relationships with these institutions, their administration, faculty, and student body yield many mutual benefits:

1. Internship programs provide students with vital training and airports with important resources to get work done.
2. Faculty have the knowledge and expertise to guide students in important work for the airport such as economic impact studies, marketing plans, and website and graphics design.
3. University administrators and tenured faculty members have extensive networks of their own that airport managers can tap.
4. Student organizations are a good volunteer source for community events such as an airport open house.

### 12.1.5 YOUTH PROGRAMS

Youth programs, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Young Eagles, also provide many mutual benefits:

1. Involvement with youth programs is a way for airports to engage in the community and get the next generation passionate about aviation.
2. Youth programs are also a great source for volunteer help for airport events. For example, Boy Scouts are required to complete a certain number of community service hours to advance in rank and are always looking for opportunities to serve.

### 12.1.6 IDEAS FOR NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Host a chamber of commerce event at the airport.
- Establish a regular monthly meeting with the local economic development organization to review airport tenant prospects.
- Arrange an airport tour for the local Boys Scout or Girl Scout troop.
- Set up a marketing intern program between the local college and the airport.
- Attend a chamber After Hours event or participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

*Remember, networking is the art of building alliances and important relationships over time through various means. Thus, the business, civic, and non-profit networking opportunities identified in this chapter are just a beginning. Be creative and look to your community for valuable networking opportunities that will benefit the airport.*

## 12.2 NETWORKING WITH PROFESSIONAL AND INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	...	...

**Definition:** Membership in professional organizations offers invaluable networking opportunities for small commercial and general aviation airports. Participating in professional conferences, seminars, and meetings allows airport managers to perfect their skills and keep up to date with others working in the industry.

There are many professional organizations that offer opportunities for airport managers to network with colleagues, industry experts, aviation consultants, and other champions of small commercial and general aviation airports. Many of these organizations also offer professional development courses. The following is a list of some of those organizations:

- AAAE: American Association of Airport Executives
- ACI-NA: Airports Council International-North America
- ACRP: Airport Cooperative Research Program
- AOPA: Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- EAA: Experimental Aircraft Association
- GAMA: General Aviation Manufacturers Association
- HAI: Helicopter Association International
- IATA: International Air Transport Association Airport Advisors
- NASAO: National Association of State Aviation Officials
- NATA: The National Air Transportation Association
- NBAA: National Business Aviation Association
- PAMA: Professional Aviation Maintenance Association
- State Airport Operators Associations
- TRB: Transportation Research Board

All these organizations sponsor conferences and have active committees that are fertile ground for networking among industry leaders, experts, and relevant businesses. Each has its own mission and goals, membership size, annual dues as well as products and services available to its membership. The amount of information that is available on each organization's website is substantial. Thus, readers are urged to visit these websites to learn more about each organization before making a decision to join.

The following questions can help you determine which professional organizations are right for you:

- First, what are your expectations for joining a specific organization?
- Does the organization actually provide the specific type and level of support you need?

- What are the costs to join and renew membership?
- Who else is a member and are they the individuals with whom you want to network?
- Specifically, what kinds of networking opportunities are there?
- How many organizations do you have the time and money to join?
- If you had to select just one organization to join, which one best fits your needs?

The following list will help you evaluate professional organizations:

- Check out the websites. These sites are filled with valuable information about the organization and its members.
- Compare all the organizations you are interested in to see which ones offer the best combination of content, connections, and commitment level.
- Talk to colleagues who are current members to find out their opinions about the organization.
- Go as a guest to an event, seminar, or conference before joining to see if it is a good fit and meets your specific needs.
- Once you join, get involved to really take advantage of the organization's potential for effective networking.
- Evaluate your membership at renewal time; if you're not getting what you need, consider switching to another organization.

## 12.3 TRADESHOWS AND CONFERENCES

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	...	...

**Definition:** *Tradeshows and conferences organized by the professional organizations reviewed in this Guidebook provide an excellent means to network with colleagues and experts in the industry. They include national conventions and conferences, as well as smaller topical seminars.*

Selected tradeshows and conferences are described in the following subsections. Much of the background information on these events comes directly from the organizations' websites, so we encourage readers to visit specific websites of interest.

### 12.3.1 GENERAL AVIATION CONFERENCES

#### **AAAE General Aviation Issues Conference**

<http://www.aaae.org/>

The AAAE General Aviation (GA) Issues Conference is an annual event held in April or May that addresses many aspects of general aviation at the national level. This annual conference is geared to airport leaders, FBO owners and managers, business operators, aircraft manufacturers, students, press, and other members of the general aviation industry. It offers an opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss and debate a variety of issues vital to general aviation. The conference also provides a unique networking forum with members of the general aviation community, the U.S. government, and the aviation industry.

**NBAA Annual Meeting and Convention****<http://www.nbaa.org/>**

Held in October, the NBAA Annual Meeting and Convention “is the premier event for business aviation. It is where business aviation business gets transacted. It is where business aviation news gets announced—and made. It is where business aviation history gets started. It brings the world of business aviation together.” With close to 33,000 attendees and 1,200 exhibitors, this convention offers over 100 information sessions and the opportunity to meet and talk with pilots, other airports, and industry representatives.

**EAA AirVenture Annual Convention****<http://www.airventure.org/>**

EAA AirVenture is the annual convention of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), a grass-roots aviation organization dedicated to keeping aviation fun, accessible, and safe. During the last week of July, EAA members hold this annual gathering and invite the aviation world to participate. Wittman Regional Airport, located in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, “becomes a magical place where innovation, experimentation, and imagination aren’t just buzzwords on television commercials. They’re words that actually describe these average-Joe rocket scientists.” The Oshkosh event attracts representatives from just about every aspect of aviation, from NASA and the military to mega-dollar business jets, ultralights, pilot-training companies, and gadget manufacturers. Oshkosh is a showcase for meticulously cared for antique, classic, and homebuilt airplanes (some 10,000 of them with more than 750,000 participants). In addition, there are more than 500 educational forums, seminars, and workshops held during the week.

**AOPA Aviation Summit****<http://www.aopa.org/>**

AOPA Aviation Summit is an annual event held in November. The summit brings together pilots, aircraft owners, aviation businesses, students, and policy makers to share thoughts on the top issues that are shaping aviation policy, funding, safety, and security. Attendees also have the opportunity to view new products and services and network with many industry representatives.

**12.3.2 AIR SERVICE CONFERENCES****ACI-NA Jumpstart® Conference****<http://www.aci-na.org/conferences>**

ACI-NA JumpStart Air Service Development Program was launched in 1997 by ACI-NA members as a forum to improve the communication process in the air service arena between airports and airlines. In 2008, JumpStart connected 43 airline route planners from 24 airlines with 154 airport marketing professionals at over 800 one-on-one meetings. The “round-robin” meeting format provides both airport and airline participants with the unique opportunity to build and strengthen relationships. Airports request a private, 20-minute meeting with up to ten airlines. ACI-NA schedules airports with those airlines that request meetings. On the evening prior to the program, ACI-NA hosts an ice breaker reception for JumpStart participants where all airports are given an opportunity to interact with those airlines that they will not be meeting with during the actual event.

**AAAE Great Lakes Chapter (GLC) National Air Service Conference**

<http://www.glcaaae.org>

The Great Lakes Chapter of AAAE was organized in 1968 and was originally titled the North Central Chapter. This chapter was created in the early 1960s from a joining of several Midwest state airport management associations. The Great Lakes Chapter has grown to include twelve Midwestern U.S. states and two Canadian provinces. The National Air Service Conference is sponsored by the Great Lakes Chapter of AAAE, AAAE, and ACI-NA. The conference is designed to provide airport managers the opportunity to discuss and share information about the status of the airline industry, air service initiatives, and programs.

### 12.3.3 AVIATION FORECAST CONFERENCE

**FAA Aviation Forecast Conference**

[http://www.faa.gov/news/conferences\\_events/](http://www.faa.gov/news/conferences_events/)

The annual FAA Aviation Forecast Conference, held in March or April, provides an opportunity for members of the aviation community to discuss their views on the future of the aviation industry. Each year, the FAA presents its national forecast for the major domestic sectors of aviation. Industry and government leaders also typically discuss other FAA initiatives such as NextGen or airport authorization legislation.

### 12.3.4 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCES

**ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference**

<http://www.aci-na.org/conferences>

The Marketing and Communications Conference is held annually in June in conjunction with the JumpStart Air Service Development Program. The conference attracts over 350 attendees and is the second largest ACI-NA event. Air service, customer service, marketing, media relations, and public relations professionals from both large and small airports attend. The first two and a half days cover the various disciplines of marketing and communications including community relations, customer service, public relations, marketing, air service development, and communications. The last day features the JumpStart Air Service Development program where airports have prescheduled meetings with individual airlines.

**AAAE Toolbox for Communications: PR Basics and Advanced Tactics Conference**

<http://www.aaae.org>

The Toolbox for Communications: PR Basics and Advanced Tactics Conference is a new meeting held in October and sponsored by the AAAE. This event provides an airport public relations overview that includes the following:

- How to establish a good working relationship with your local media
- Taking the temperature of blogs and online news related to the airport and how to use that information to prioritize your time
- 24/7 media coverage: how to respond to it
- When and when not to hold a press conference
- How to do a joint airport/airline special announcement that builds your name and brand equity



- How to roll out an announcement, such as unveiling a new capital improvement program, with the biggest impact
- When and how to hire an outside public relations firm to help

In addition, veteran industry practitioners offer specific advice on handling crisis incidents, crafting media messages, and avoiding costly mistakes.

### 12.3.5 MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND OVERHAUL (MRO) CONFERENCES

#### **Aviation Week's MRO Conference and Exhibition**

**[www.aviationweek.com/conferences/](http://www.aviationweek.com/conferences/)**

The annual MRO Conference and Exhibition, MRO Military, and Interiors, are three events in one held in October. The conference provides opportunities to learn more about pressing issues in commercial and military MRO and aircraft interiors. The following are statistics from the website regarding this conference:

- 91% of MRO Exhibitors connected with prospects they hoped to meet
- 21% of MRO Exhibitors CLOSED business on the show floor
- 87% of MRO Exhibitors scheduled follow-up appointments
- 94% of MRO Exhibitors made NEW business contacts
- 95% of MRO Conference Attendees agree session information is timely and relevant
- 74% of MRO Conference Attendees agree this information is not available elsewhere
- 53% of Exhibition Hall Attendees revised their short list based on meeting exhibitors at MRO
- 74% of Exhibition Hall Attendees made follow-up meetings
- 23% of Exhibition Hall Attendees made buying decisions on the floor

### 12.3.6 AIRPORT AND STATE FOCUSED CONFERENCES

#### **AAAE F. Russell Hoyt National Airports Conference**

**<http://www.aaae.org/>**

This annual conference, sponsored by the AAAE and held each fall, examines airport, aviation industry, and regulatory issues. The conference is typically set up with a combination of guest speakers, roundtable discussions, and exhibits.

#### **NASAO Annual Convention and Tradeshow**

**<http://www.nasao.org/>**

NASAO sponsors an annual convention and tradeshow in September. The convention offers those who attend an opportunity to meet with the aviation decision makers from all 50 state governments, as well as Guam and Puerto Rico. NASAO events are well known for the high quality of convention topics and technical sessions presented by distinguished experts. Additionally, NASAO convention social activities provide networking opportunities with state and federal government aviation professionals, as well as national aviation industry leaders.

State Aviation Conferences

Most states have airport operator associations. It is typical for these organizations to have at least two annual meetings in spring and fall. The associations provide a venue for state DOTs and the regional FAA district offices to communicate with all the airports. Some associations serve as advocates for aviation issues with state legislative bodies. These organizations also raise funds for scholarships and offer training. The airport operators associations are excellent ways to network with other airport managers in your state and to discuss a wide range of airport issues.

FAA Regional Conferences  
<http://www.faa.gov/>

The FAA sponsors a number of regional conferences throughout the year in different locations throughout the United States that focus on regional airport issues. Visit the FAA website provided for a complete list of regional conferences.

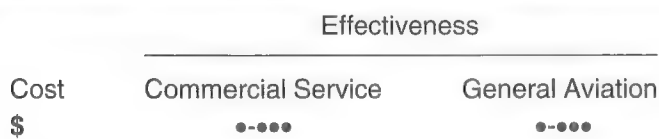
12.3.7 TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE

TRB Annual Meeting  
<http://www.trb.org/meeting/>

TRB sponsors its annual meeting in January. It is “an information-packed program that will attract more than 10,000 transportation professionals from around the world.” The TRB Annual Meeting program covers all transportation modes, with more than 3,000 presentations in nearly 600 sessions addressing topics of interest to all attendees—policy makers; administrators; practitioners; researchers; and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions.

*Airports should choose conferences carefully, have specific goals in mind, schedule important meetings in advance, have a means to collect important contact information, and plan to follow up after the conference.*

12.4 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



**Definition:** Today, it is common in the aviation industry to talk about strategic partnerships, alliances, and joint ventures. Most of these partnerships, especially among airlines or between airports and airlines, are defined by contract. In this chapter, the term “strategic marketing alliance” is used more informally to describe “the joining of forces and resources to achieve a common objective.” Airports form strategic alliances with other groups to increase organizational capacity, resources, and expertise to accomplish specific marketing objectives. Strategic marketing alliances also make it possible to combine and use the networks of participating groups.

Airports are an integral part of the local economy as a revenue and employment generator. As such, airports share many of the same economic development goals and objectives as other community groups. Consequently, there are many partnerships that could be formed. Exhibit 12.1 shows some of the possibilities.

**Exhibit 12.1—Strategic Partnerships for Airports.**

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

**12.4.1 BENEFITS OF CREATING STRATEGIC MARKETING ALLIANCES**

Alliances make it possible to combine resources (people, money, and time) to work toward a common goal. Alliances can also bring together different skill sets, complementary experience, and networks. Airports can save time and gain experience from other groups. If managed properly, strategic marketing alliances improve the odds for a successful outcome.

**12.4.2 COMMON MARKETING ALLIANCES**

The following discussion provides some specific examples of how airports are strategically aligning themselves with stakeholders in the community to achieve their marketing goals.

**AIRCRAFT SERVICE PROVIDERS (FBOs, MROs, AND FUEL SUPPLIERS)**

Fixed base operators (FBOs), maintenance, repair and overhaul operators (MROs), and fuel suppliers are excellent airport partners for marketing products and services to targeted audiences.

**AIRLINES**

There are numerous examples of strategic partnerships with airlines. Airports and communities will offer rate reductions, local advertising, revenue guarantees or other commitments to use retained, new, or enhanced service. Some airports provide "over and/or under the wing" services including baggage handling, ticketing, and fueling.

## AIRPORT TENANTS

---

Airport tenants are good strategic partners. They have selected the airport as the location for their business, they have signed a lease, use airport infrastructure, and thus, want to make sure that the airport is successful. Joint marketing that benefits the tenant and the airport makes good business sense. Existing tenants are often very good lead generators for net tenants.

## BANKS

---

Banks can provide important leadership in a community. Bankers operate within large business and civic networks. They can assist airports with increasing awareness of the local airport, encouraging greater use of the airport, helping to organize the business community, and raising funds for airport promotions and marketing.

## CITIES IN THE REGION

---

Airports usually serve more than one community. Joint marketing efforts that combine community resources offer an opportunity to tap different expertise, share costs and effort, and extend the reach of a marketing campaign to the entire service area.

## GOVERNMENT GROUPS (STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL)

---

In the last decade, several states and regional organizations have sponsored air service development initiatives and advertising campaigns. In Wyoming and Pennsylvania, state DOTs have funded statewide websites designed to promote aviation and direct users to individual airport websites. Minnesota and Wyoming have also funded radio and television advertisements that can be customized for local use. Individual airports can then incorporate the state's promotional materials as part of their own marketing campaigns.

## PRIVATE INDUSTRY

---

Local businesses have made enormous contributions to airport development efforts. They can serve as strong allies with the airport and can effectively represent the community that the airport serves. On the commercial aviation side, business leaders that pledge to use a new or improved air service carry weight with the airlines. Local businesses are also a rich resource to identify new tenant prospects for the airport or industrial park.

## REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS

---

Airports are land managers. Land development and redevelopment usually engages local economic development groups to find new airport tenants. Airports also form partnerships with real estate developers, although these partnerships are formal and bound by contract.

## TRAVEL INDUSTRY

---

Travel agents are another logical strategic marketing ally. They are knowledgeable about air service and can convey to their clients the advantages and value of using the local airport.

## UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND FLIGHT SCHOOLS

Educational institutions and airports are often important partners. Many airports already provide a great training ground for business and aviation students, and universities and colleges can provide knowledge, expertise, and resources. Many airports have engaged the local university or college to conduct economic impact studies, develop a business or marketing plan, help with a website, produce a video, or design/participate in a public relations campaign. Flight schools are also natural airport partners, whether the school is on the airport or housed within a local college or university.

## EXAMPLES OF GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER

- Airport, chamber, and economic development organizations partner at a major convention, sharing a booth to market the airport and community.
- The airport establishes a marketing internship program for students at the local university or college while increasing its own marketing staff to achieve its goals.
- The airport works with travel agents and local resorts to develop an attractive vacation package to draw visitors to the area for recreational activities that use the airport, local businesses, restaurants, and hotels.
- The airport and FBO develop a marketing campaign to increase transient pilot activity, possibly through fuel discounts or ad campaigns.

## 12.5 LOBBYING

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$-\$\$\$	...	...

**Definition:** Lobbying occurs at many levels of government. The rules and regulations applicable to lobbying are beyond the scope of this Guidebook. However, lobbying is another form of marketing and it needs to be viewed in that context.

Many airports retain registered lobbyists to secure funding for specific airport projects or legislative initiatives. Some airports visit their congressional delegations either in their home state or in Washington, D.C., to advocate for certain projects. Various civic organizations such as the chamber of commerce organize annual trips to Washington, D.C., to meet with legislators.

Airports lobby at every level of government for FAA/Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding; state funding; local airport budget and funding; land use and zoning; and aviation taxes and fees.

## 12.6 CONTACT MANAGERS AND NETWORKING TOOLS

	Effectiveness	
Cost	Commercial Service	General Aviation
\$	...	...

**Definition:** Contact managers are tools used to develop a contact list, record interactions, and keep in touch. They are indispensable if you are serious about networking. There are various contact manager solutions ranging from paper lists or Rolodexes to the latest contact manager software.

Airport managers that are still using paper contact lists should explore the use of contact manager software.

### 12.6.1 TYPES OF CONTACT MANAGER AND NETWORKING TOOLS

This chapter has identified a number of networking opportunities. To keep from losing vital contact information earned through your networking efforts, it is important to develop some kind of process to keep track of and manage those contacts.

This section describes three alternative methods to keep track of contacts:

1. Manual systems
2. Electronic and computer database/customer relationship management (CRM) tools, and
3. Internet networking websites

Which tools and method airport managers select to manage their contacts will depend on how contacts will be used for marketing activities.

### 12.6.2 CONTACT MANAGER TOOLS

#### MANUAL CONTACT SYSTEMS

---

Manual contact systems are used by most of us. We collect business cards and store them in a file or business card holder. We use a guest book for interested parties to sign and log their contact information. We distribute lists during meetings for attendees to record their contact information. These manual systems can be very effective for gathering and grouping contacts. However, marketing and promotional efforts associated with those contacts often require repetitive manual steps, for example addressing envelopes to recipients each time the airport sends out a mailer. Thus, manual systems may be the least costly option but they are usually much more labor intensive.

If an airport manager networks extensively, manual systems quickly become inadequate. Contact information is hard to keep current in manual form. Extensive networking yields many contacts so physical lists become hard to maintain. Most important, an electronic system will interface with email or word processing software and make it much easier to keep in touch with your contacts.

*Therefore, we suggest that manual systems, such as collecting business cards, should be combined with some type of electronic system to improve overall effectiveness of managing and effectively using contacts over time as part of the airport's overall marketing strategy.*

#### WORD PROCESSING, SPREADSHEET, AND EMAIL SOFTWARE

---

With basic computer word processing and spreadsheet software you can enter, edit, and manage contacts. You can also produce mass mailings and labels. There are several software options.

Spreadsheet software can be set up for data entry of manual contact information and then it is easy to update or add to the list. Specific “flags” or codes can be assigned to contacts that identify attributes about a contact such as: airline, civic group, individual, tenant, and so on. Later, the contact file can be sorted to find all those contacts with specific codes to send a message, a newsletter, or an announcement. The cost to implement this type of system is minimal and the benefits in streamlining communication are obvious.

Email software also has address books where email addresses and corresponding contact information reside. The information is entered once, and then updated as changes to contact information occur. Many advanced cell phones or personal digital assistants (PDAs) will synchronize with email address books so that contact lists can be maintained and updated from multiple input sources. If you are using email as a marketing device, an email address book may be all that is required. Address books can also be shared among users.

## DATABASE TOOLS AND CONTACT MANAGER

---

Larger sales and marketing groups employ robust databases to set up and maintain contact information, manage relationships, and execute marketing campaigns. Some database tools reside on individual desktop computers while others reside on servers where multiple users have access to the information. Database tools are very flexible. They can be set up to hold a range of contact information that can be exported and used for a variety of marketing activities.

The most sophisticated contact manager tools are known as CRM tools. One CRM tool is sold as a stand-alone or group software package. Another is a service that maintains contact information on an offsite server. Use of this product involves monthly fees. These products require training to set up and use. There are also open source or free to the public contact manager tools that are available on the Internet. One of these allows multiple users to access the contact database; however, it requires initial setup effort.

There are also e-marketing tools that provide users with electronic marketing tools such as templates for e-newsletters or surveys for a fee. These packages include a way to link into your contact manager to retrieve lists of recipients of your marketing material.

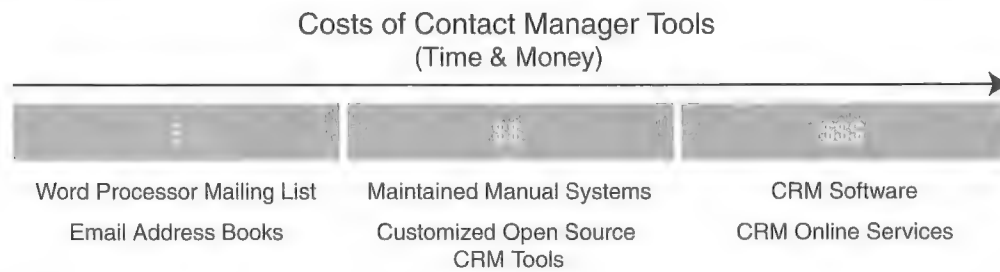
## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING A CONTACT MANAGER

---

Airports should research their marketing requirements before selecting electronic tools for contact management. The following questions are useful to ask when considering how best to manage contacts:

- How many individuals need access to the contact list?
- What will be done with the contact list? (letters? e-newsletters? Press releases?)
- Is there an IT person that supports the city or airport? What does he/she recommend?
- Will existing email or contact manager tools adequately support networking and marketing activities?

Exhibit 12.2 shows the relative cost and level of effort of implementing various contact manager systems.

**Exhibit 12.2—Relative Cost of Contact Manager Systems.**

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

### 12.6.3 INTERNET NETWORKING TOOLS

The Internet has created a whole new meaning to the word networking and new communications technology and tools are evolving rapidly. Following is a brief description of some of the Internet networking tools that airport managers might find useful. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather a sample of some of the main networking tools.

#### PROFESSIONAL ONLINE NETWORKING

There are a number of websites now on the Internet that provide professional or social online networking. The following description is limited to one example. However, readers can learn more about online networking options by visiting individual websites of interest.

One online networking website describes itself as “an online network of more than 25 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries. When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional accomplishments. Your profile helps you find and be found by former colleagues, clients, and partners. You can add more connections by inviting trusted contacts to join . . . and connect to you. Your network consists of your connections, your connections’ connections, and the people they know, linking you to thousands of qualified professionals.” This service is free to join. However, it also offers paid accounts that provide more tools for networking.

#### WEB CONFERENCING

Web conferencing is used to conduct live meetings or presentations over the Internet.

In a web conference, participants are connected to each other via the Internet using their personal computer as the communications device. This can be either a downloaded application on each of the attendees’ computers or a web-based application where the attendees will connect to the conference by entering a common web-site address or URL. Web conferencing tools vary greatly in functionality and cost, and there are even some free web conferencing services available on the Internet. The tool enables participants to view material and conduct a conference call at the same time. Some web conferencing also allows participants to see each other.



## INSTANT MESSAGING

---

Instant messaging (IM) is a form of real-time communication between two or more people based on typed text. The text is conveyed via computers connected over a network such as the Internet. The difference between IM and email is the perceived synchronicity of the communication by the user, meaning real-time (IM) versus “delayed response” (email). Instant messaging has been widely adopted as an informal business communications tool, and is included because of its wide use.

## BLOGS

---

A blog is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject, while others function as more personal journals or entries such as a travel log. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs or webpages related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual. A blog can be a very useful networking tool, bringing individuals together who share a common interest or concern and keeping them apprised of current events as they unfold.

## PART 4

# **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

# CHAPTER 13

## MARKETING PLAN WORKSHEETS

- 13.1 SWOT Primer
- 13.2 SWOT Examples
- 13.3 SWOT Analysis Worksheet
- 13.4 Marketing Inventory Worksheet—Human Resources
- 13.5 Marketing Inventory Worksheet—Financial Resources
- 13.6 Marketing Action Plan
- 13.7 Marketing Record

This chapter provides worksheets, prompts, and examples to complete your marketing plan.

### 13.1 SWOT PRIMER

Before beginning the SWOT process and worksheets, you might want to look over the SWOT primer in Exhibit 13.1. It is intended to elicit your first impression or “top of mind awareness” and whether you record your responses or simply keep them “in mind,” it is a useful thought starter for the SWOT analysis.



**Exhibit 13.1—SWOT Primer.**

- Our customers think . . .
- Our employees always . . .
- We stand out from the competition because . . .
- Our airport is known for its . . .
- We are great at . . .
- We want our customers to . . .
- We want to be remembered for . . .
- We are proud of . . .
- What makes us different is . . .
- We have gotten better at . . .
- We strive to . . .
- We have achieved . . .
- Our community thinks . . .
- Our community would like . . .

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc.

## 13.2 SWOT EXAMPLES

Exhibit 13.2 contains a list of possible SWOTs that might apply to your airport (not all will apply and not all your SWOTs will be listed). This table should be used to help guide the planning team in completing the SWOT analysis worksheet on the following page.

**Exhibit 13.2—SWOT Examples.**

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location/geography: convenience</li> <li>• Available land</li> <li>• Airport infrastructure</li> <li>• Price, value, quality</li> <li>• Customer service</li> <li>• Strong demand for services</li> <li>• Brand recognition</li> <li>• Experience/knowledge</li> <li>• Resources, people</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps in capabilities</li> <li>• Loss of air service</li> <li>• Lack of money</li> <li>• Poor image in community</li> <li>• Morale, commitment, leadership</li> <li>• Runway/taxiways/ramps in need of repair</li> <li>• Land constrained</li> <li>• Airport under-designed for demand</li> <li>• Air space limitations</li> <li>• Lack of competitive strength</li> <li>• Unhappy tenants or neighbors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New target markets</li> <li>• New sources of funding</li> <li>• Key partnerships</li> <li>• Improvements in infrastructure</li> <li>• New aircraft/new markets</li> <li>• Application of new technology</li> <li>• Overcrowding at nearby airport</li> <li>• Untapped volunteers</li> <li>• Trained workforce</li> <li>• Interest by private developer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of area business</li> <li>• Loss of key partners</li> <li>• National security issues</li> <li>• New FAA rules and regulations</li> <li>• Environmental regulations</li> <li>• Airline accidents</li> <li>• Weakened economy</li> <li>• Increased fuel prices</li> <li>• Competitor plans</li> <li>• Encroachment on airport</li> <li>• Zoning issues</li> </ul>

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and GMH Consulting, LLC

Exhibit 13.3 contains spaces to list the current perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for your airport. Do not limit yourself to the items included in the preceding example, but rather use the chart to help stimulate ideas and discussion about your airport.



**Exhibit 13.3—SWOT Analysis Worksheet.**

[illegible]

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and GMH Consulting, LLC

### 13.4 MARKETING INVENTORY WORKSHEET—HUMAN RESOURCES

Part of the SWOT analysis is the identification of resources (both human and financial) needed to implement the marketing plan. You should fill in the worksheet (Exhibit 13.4) to help you ascertain what expertise is available to you on either a free or paid basis.



**Exhibit 13.4—Marketing Inventory Worksheet: Human Resources.**

Resource	Areas of Expertise	Cost (If Any)	Comments
Existing: Airport Manager			
Airport Marketing Staff			
Outside: Volunteer			
Consultant presentation to clients	Develop material for \$_____	Hourly rate	
Local Business			
Local Media	Reaching local patrons		
Chamber of Commerce	Identify businesses within area		
Economic Development Organization	Defining the areas for economic development		
Local University			
City			
Other			
Other			

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and GMH Consulting, LLC

### 13.5 MARKETING INVENTORY WORKSHEET—FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The worksheet in Exhibit 13.5 is equally important, because it provides a way for you to estimate what financial resources will be available to support your marketing efforts.



**Exhibit 13.5—Marketing Inventory Worksheet: Financial Resources.**

Funding Source	Estimate	Comments
Airport Operating Fund	\$	
City Budget	\$	
Grants	\$	
Chamber of Commerce	\$	
Economic Development	\$	
Local Businesses	\$	
Matching Funds	\$	
Donations	\$	
Fund Raisers	\$	
In-Kind Contributions	\$	
Other:	\$	
Other:		
Other:	\$	
Total	\$	

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and GMH Consulting, LLC

13.6 MARKETING ACTION PLAN

The worksheet in Exhibit 13.6 will be useful in recording the various tasks and elements of your marketing plan. It is helpful to have a master list of all activities for coordination and tracking purposes.



Exhibit 13.6—Marketing Action Plan Worksheet.

Objective/Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity/Task	Deliverable	Responsible Party	State Date	Due Date	Budget

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and GMH Consulting, LLC



### 13.7 MARKETING RECORD

The purpose of the worksheet in Exhibit 13.7 is to provide the airport with documents that record the airport's marketing efforts. It might be useful to start with the prior year's activity, but certainly any current and future marketing activity should be recorded.



**Exhibit 13.7—Marketing Record.**

Marketing Activity	Dates	Purpose	Estimated Total Cost	Airport Cost	Funding Sources	Effective/ Not Effective
Example: Air Service Billboard		Expand Market	\$25,000	\$2,500	Airport Budget, State Grant	

Source: KRAMER aerotek, inc., and GMH Consulting, LLC

# CHAPTER 14

## CASE STUDIES

- 14.1 Greeley-Weld County Airport
- 14.2 Houma-Terrebonne Airport
- 14.3 Arnold Palmer Airport

This chapter provides more complete descriptions of three case studies.

### 14.1 GREELEY-WELD COUNTY AIRPORT

#### 14.1.1 BACKGROUND

The Greeley-Weld County Airport is a general aviation airport in northern Colorado with approximately 145,000 annual operations. The airport is run by six full-time and three part-time employees. Airport marketing is handled principally by the airport manager and his staff as part of their overall job responsibilities. Most of the airport's budget goes to airport operations and staff. Between \$5,000 and \$10,000 is spent on marketing, including a substantial contribution from the Upstate Colorado Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which helps fund the airport's participation at the State of Colorado's booth at the annual NBAA conference. Upstate Colorado Economic Development subsequently is reimbursed the amount of their investment in this endeavor through a Colorado Enterprise Zone Trade Show Program Grant administered by the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Greeley-Weld County Airport has experienced development opportunities arising out of substantial population growth in communities north of Denver. It also competes directly with Ft. Collins-Loveland Airport which is 20 miles west of Greeley. Ft. Collins-Loveland Airport has a very good location next to the I-25 corridor and a potential private developer with an extensive marketing capability. To compete effectively and address the airport's future opportunities, the airport manager decided to prepare an economic development plan, a marketing plan, and a public information plan. All of these documents were outside the airport's current budget.

To move ahead, the airport manager called on existing relationships in the Greeley area for assistance. For the economic development plan, the manager contacted the Director of the EDC. The EDC principally serves Greeley and Weld County. The airport and the EDC already exchange development and investment leads. For the public information plan, the Airport Manager turned to the City of Greeley Public Information Office for assistance. For the marketing plan, the manager engaged students from Metro State's Aviation and Aerospace Science Department. The marketing plan became a special student project.

This case study was selected because Greeley-Weld County Airport created three strategic documents with a small budget. The approach had important side benefits including strengthening ties with the regional EDC, the City of Greeley, and giving students at Metro State a real experience putting together a marketing plan.

An overview of how each plan was created is described in the following subsections.

### 14.1.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In 2004, the Greeley-Weld County Airport Authority adopted its Master Plan, which is a comprehensive document detailing specific projections, development alternatives, environmental constraints, capital improvements, and more. The Airport Manager did not want to have a static document, especially in view of the development that was taking place in northern Colorado. The manager viewed an economic development plan as a way to maintain a consistent direction for the future of the airport and as such, this plan would be a direct extension of the Master Plan. With no explicit budget to prepare the development plan, the airport manager approached the Director of the Upstate Colorado EDC and asked for technical assistance as to what elements went into a basic economic development plan. At no cost to the airport, the EDC provided a framework for the plan. The plan was constructed in-house by airport staff, with the assistance of the EDC. The Airport Board of Commissioners served as a steering committee for the formulation of this document and ultimately adopted the plan.

### 14.1.3 PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN

The airport manager also recognized that a public information plan could serve multiple purposes. It sets procedures for news releases and emergency situations. It also provides a mechanism to disseminate information about the airport. The airport had considerable experience talking with the press and the public, but had no expertise in making a plan. The airport manager approached the City of Greeley Public Information Office for assistance and direction. The Information Office showed the airport what needed to be in a public information plan (i.e., the elements) and the airport staff wrote the plan. Of the three documents described in this case study, the information plan is most used, primarily because it resides on the airport's website. The airport loaded basic information and photos on its website. This information is used extensively by the press, by prospective businesses, and other interested parties. The information posted on the web has reduced the number of calls the airport gets for information and has helped focus follow-up requests for additional information.

### 14.1.4 MARKETING PLAN

The third component was a marketing plan for the airport. In January 2007, the Greeley-Weld County Airport embarked on a joint project with Metro State, a public 4-year college. The Aviation and Aerospace Science Department at Metro State is the fifth largest collegiate aviation program in the country, offering a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in Aviation Technology, Aviation Management, Aerospace Operations, and Aviation Maintenance Management. Greeley's marketing plan was one of several Capstone Projects offered to second semester senior year students to apply what they have learned from their college curriculum to a real-life airport situation.

Two teams of students submitted resumes and qualifications to participate in the project (as if it were a consultant selection). One team of three students was selected for the project. Faculty from the Aviation and Aerospace Department and the Marketing Departments sponsored the project and the Greeley-Weld County Airport Manager remained actively involved. The project included the following activities: (1) a demographic study for Greeley-Weld County, (2) a competitive analysis of surrounding airports, (3) a review of marketing strategies being used by other airports, and (4) a set of marketing recommendations for the Greeley-Weld County Airport.

The Metro State team spent 5 months developing the marketing plan. The team relied heavily on published airport data and phone interviews with key stakeholders. The students performed a SWOT analysis of the Greeley-Weld County Airport to better understand the actual and/or perceived strengths and weaknesses of the airport along with the potential opportunities and threats that could influence the airport's marketing strategy going forward. The team also reviewed the airport's infrastructure, operations, location in relationship to Denver International Airport (DIA) and other Front Range airports, and available land for development.

The students presented the marketing plan to the Greeley-Weld County Airport in May 2007 and it was adopted by the Greeley-Weld County Airport Authority Board of Commissioners in July 2007.

The airport donated \$1,000 to the Metro State's Aviation and Aerospace Science Department in appreciation of the student and faculty effort.

#### 14.1.5 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Greeley-Weld County Airport created three key planning and implementation documents. They were not fancy, but they provided the airport with the basic information and strategies to go forward. In so doing, the airport also established a baseline of data and documents that can be updated as needed.

The following are lessons learned for airports that are contemplating strategic planning and marketing:

- Investigate municipal, county, and state resources to fund airport planning.
- Consider engaging students from a local college, but expect to set aside time to scope and follow the effort.
- Adjust expectations for deliverables according to the resources available to accomplish the task.
- The economic development plan, the public information plan, and the marketing plan can be completed with limited resources. They can benefit an airport and are definitely worth doing.
- It is much better to take some form of action with limited financial resources than to take no action at all because large funding resources are not available.

## 14.2 HOUMA-TERREBONNE AIRPORT

### 14.2.1 BACKGROUND

Houma-Terrebonne Airport is the largest general aviation airport in Louisiana. It is also the third busiest airport in the state with approximately 117,000 annual operations. Administration of the airport is the responsibility of the Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commission (H-TAC). The airport is financially self-supporting from revenues received from leases, fuel flowage fees, and other income producing activities. The airport has a full-time airport director who, with the help of an administrative assistant, is responsible for overseeing the marketing activities of the airport and industrial park. Thus, direct resources at the airport for marketing and business development are scarce. However, the airport director has a strong working relationship with the local economic development organization (Terrebonne Economic Development Authority [TEDA]). It is this organization that serves as a significant marketing engine for the airport and industrial park. Between \$2,500 and \$5,000 is spent from the

airport's operating budget on marketing materials annually. This figure does not include travel expenses to marketing events such as NBAA or funds spent by the TEDA on behalf of the airport through the State of Louisiana's marketing match grant program.

Houma-Terrebonne Airport is located 55 miles southwest of New Orleans and 26 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. In August and September 2005, Louisiana's coastline was ravaged by two of the largest hurricanes in U.S. history. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused extensive damage to major sections of Louisiana's coastline including significant damage to business and residential areas.

With a location just beyond the direct impact of the hurricanes, Houma-Terrebonne Airport responded to the opportunity presented by the devastation. Specifically, these storms wiped out the shoreline helicopter operations that support the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana is the second leading natural gas producer in the United States and third leading crude oil producer when including the oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico. Oil and gas activity spans the full range of the production cycle from exploration and production to the refining, marketing, and transportation of crude oil, natural gas, and refined products.

Working collaboratively with TEDA, the Houma-Terrebonne Airport attracted three new helicopter service companies including one of the world's leading helicopter service companies. Subsequently, this company also relocated its maintenance operations to the airport. Before the hurricanes in 2005, the airport's annual operations were just over 80,000. Today, annual operations are approximately 117,000.

This case study was selected to demonstrate how airports with limited resources can build a strong marketing team by working collaboratively with community organizations that share similar economic development goals. The case study also shows how awareness of the airport's role in the regional economy makes it possible to respond quickly to new business opportunities. In this instance, the relationship between the Houma-Terrebonne Airport and TEDA was a major key to success.

#### 14.2.2 THE TERREBONNE-TEDA ALLIANCE

TEDA is a relatively new organization, formed through special Louisiana legislation. Its mission is to strengthen Terrebonne's economic base through financial and technical support to retain and expand businesses in the area. TEDA is funded by a portion of state revenues collected for business licenses and has resources to engage in a variety of economic development activities in the community. This subsection contains some of the main ways in which the Houma-Terrebonne Airport and TEDA work together to promote economic development for the airport and community.

#### REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS

---

Regular monthly meetings are held between the Houma-Terrebonne Airport director and TEDA staff to review new business development opportunities and the status of existing opportunities. TEDA was described by the Houma-Terrebonne Airport director in a phone interview as "the organization that has the pipeline into businesses in Louisiana and other parts of the country."

## JOINT PARTICIPATION AT KEY CONFERENCES

---

Houma-Terrebonne Airport and TEDA have attended the NBAA national conference for the past 3 years where they jointly sponsor and staff a booth. This year, they will also jointly attend the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) conference. UAV has been identified as a potential strategic business opportunity. The airport has recently set aside acreage and runway access for UAV and is hoping to attract manufacturers of UAV equipment from other parts of the country to Houma-Terrebonne.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

---

The State of Louisiana has a matching grant program for businesses engaged in marketing activities to promote economic development. Through this program, the state reimburses TEDA for half of the funds spent on marketing activities that it undertakes on behalf of the airport and other local businesses.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY

---

Three years ago, TEDA completed a 35-page economic development study in conjunction with Nicholls State University. Plans are currently underway to update this study. The airport director frequently uses this study in presentations and meetings to make local government aware of the airport's impact on the community. In a recent phone interview, his advice to other airport managers was to develop an economic impact study and make key community stakeholders aware of the ways that airports provide economic benefit to the community.

## AIRPORT WEBSITE UPGRADE

---

The airport currently has a dedicated website, and plans are underway to update the website through TEDA and the state's marketing matching grant program.

### 14.2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

Houma-Terrebonne Airport is a busy general aviation airport in Louisiana with limited airport resources to promote and market the airport and industrial park. However, the airport has found effective ways to extend its marketing capabilities beyond its own staff by collaborating with key community groups, directly with the local economic development organization and indirectly through Nicholls State University. TEDA is the business development funnel for the airport as well as a source of funding for marketing activities such as participation at NBAA, editorials and advertisements, and website re-design.

The airport director has identified new business opportunities with offshore helicopter operations for the oil and gas exploration industry that have yielded incremental revenue streams and is currently expanding the airport's involvement with UAVs.

## 14.3 ARNOLD PALMER AIRPORT

### 14.3.1 BACKGROUND

Historically, Latrobe was served by US Airways Express, with nonstop service to Pittsburgh. At its peak, it received 9 nonstop flights per day. Before US Airways' bankruptcy in 2002, Pittsburgh was a major hub for US Airways. As it went through bankruptcy (twice) in the 2002–2005 period, one of the key actions it took was to dramatically “size down” the Pittsburgh hub. Latrobe's service was a casualty of the downsizing because it lost nonstop service in May 2004.

Latrobe was left without any commercial air service. In addition, since it is located only 60 miles from Pittsburgh, it did not qualify as an Essential Air Service city. Thus, it could not look to the government for subsidized support for air service. It had to rely on its own resources.

Today, Latrobe has two daily nonstop flights to Detroit on Northwest Airlines. This service began in April 2006. The steps the airport and community took to secure this service and to provide important marketing support are the subject of this case study. Latrobe was selected for this study because of its success in mobilizing community support to regain air service.

### 14.3.2 FINANCIAL SUPPORT—A PREREQUISITE FOR ANY NEW SERVICE

The airport recognized that if it were to interest a carrier to serve Latrobe, it would have to provide a financial incentive to reduce the risk associated with the new service. As noted, Latrobe did not qualify for subsidy under the Essential Air Service program. Apart from funds raised within the community, the only source that could provide sufficient funding to underwrite any new service was the Small Community Air Service Grant program.

Latrobe applied for and was successful in securing a \$600,000 grant. This grant and \$109,000 of “in-kind” contributions from the community gave the airport a reasonable financial base with which to approach an airline.

### 14.3.3 CARRIER SELECTION—WHICH AIRLINE TO TARGET

The next issue the airport faced was which airline to approach for service. There are several factors which enter into the decision-making process. If the new flights were going to succeed, Latrobe needed service into a major hub. The more connecting opportunities presented to potential Latrobe passengers, the better the chance that they would use the new service.

Based on historic passenger demand during the period Latrobe had service, the logical assumption was that any new service would be flown with small turboprop equipment, instead of regional jets or larger jets. Thus, the potential carrier had to have a division that operated “express”-type equipment. The operation of this type of equipment also meant that the hub needed to be within 300 miles of Latrobe.

Among carriers operating turboprop equipment, which carrier(s) would be interested in serving Latrobe? When Latrobe lost commercial air service, the logical alternative for Latrobe residents was to drive to the nearest convenient airport for air service. Pittsburgh is the nearest large airport, located 60 miles from Latrobe. Therefore, the airport concluded that any carrier with a large presence at Pittsburgh would probably not be interested in

inaugurating new service to Latrobe, because the carrier would already be capturing the Latrobe residents who are driving to Pittsburgh for air service.

Targeting a carrier with a limited presence in Pittsburgh would most likely produce the best results. For this carrier, the Latrobe passengers would represent a new source of revenue to their system.

Another consideration focused on the companies/industry located in the Latrobe market area and their travel patterns. For an air carrier to succeed in Latrobe, it would need to provide convenient service that met the travel demands of local businesses. International travel, especially to the Far East, was an important consideration because a number of companies located in Latrobe have international ties.

Several air carrier hubs met these criteria in terms of equipment type, distance, and connections to the Far East, including Northwest's Detroit hub.

This subsection outlines the major considerations in determining which airline to approach. Of particular interest was the work done by the Latrobe community before and after the start of the new service.

#### 14.3.4 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

After losing the US Airways service, Latrobe airport management concluded that a top priority in successfully attracting new service must be to make the community aware of what would be required to attract a new airline. To effectively convey this message, the airport manager formed a task force consisting of the head of the Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce as well as two advertising executives from the Latrobe-based WestMedia Group. (The members of the task force were interviewed for this case study.)

The purpose of the task force was to educate the region—businesses and the general public—as to the importance of commercial air service to the region, and what it would take to attract a new carrier. Many communities have a sense of “entitlement” when it comes to air service. The fact that Latrobe had already lost commercial air service and did not qualify for subsidized service removed any thoughts in this vein.

The starting point in the educational process was to convince the community to recognize that the airlines' perspective of Latrobe's business potential was critical. In other words, the community needed to “think like an airline.” Without government subsidy, the community came to realize that the market must stand on its own and that the airline had to be convinced that the market had long-term potential.

Airlines generally look to the business community and its support as a gauge of the long-term potential of a market. Latrobe knew that if it was going to convince a carrier to serve Latrobe, it needed the active support of the business community. The key phrase is “active support.” The community concluded that merely telling an airline the business community will support the new service is less effective than having the key business leaders themselves deliver this message. For that reason, the business community was included in the “pitch” to the air carrier for new service. This proved to be exactly the right approach because Northwest's first agenda item when it visited Latrobe was to meet with local business leaders.

Convincing the business leaders to actively participate in the process involved all members of the task force. Since most businesses naturally focus on the “what's in it for me?” aspect of any transaction, part of the educational process was making sure that Latrobe businesses understood the importance of air service to the region's economy and what benefits were in it for them. The airport found that in this area, people not directly associated with the airport can make significant contributions to the process. Doing so



eliminates the self-serving aspect of having an airport employee tell area businesses how important air service is to the region.

In constructing the educational campaign, one of the factors the task force focused on was community pride. The previous loss of air service was a significant blow to the community and touching that nerve was a key element in the campaign. The fundamental lesson here is that a realistic assessment of the community's strengths and weaknesses is the starting point for any campaign of this nature.

The group had multiple educational tasks: making sure the community and businesses knew what an airline would be looking for before it began service; demonstrating why air service is important to the region's economic well-being; and persuading the business community that, if the new service is successful, all parties stand to benefit economically.

To make the community aware of "what it would take" to get an airline, multiple channels and venues were used including articles and editorials in newspapers, chamber of commerce functions, open houses at the airport, and speaking engagements at numerous business/social functions such as the Rotary club.

In terms of expense, many of these activities were more "time" intensive than "money" intensive. The more expensive part of the campaign came with the announcement of service by Northwest because the community bore the responsibility to provide marketing for the new service.

#### 14.3.5 MARKETING BUDGET AND MEDIA SUPPORT

The initial marketing budget was set at approximately \$100,000 spread over a 2-year period. Broad media coverage was critical to making sure a wide audience was reached with the message about why air service is important to the region and what it will take to support a new carrier. Obviously, the task force did not have unlimited funds with which to deliver this message. The advertising executives were especially effective in crafting a wide-ranging media campaign at very reasonable rates.

The executives delivered a very simple message to the area's media outlets. Air service generates significant economic activity and all parties stand to benefit in the long term if air service is effective. Help us now and you stand to gain in the long term. A marketing brochure was also created (see Exhibit 14.1).

Advertisements announcing the new service were run in both newspapers and radio. This is the area where the educational groundwork proved beneficial because the media outlets recognized the value of air service and helped the airport task force stretch its promotional dollars. It was a cooperative effort. Billboard ads were also used, and the airport donated tickets to be used as prizes in fundraising events for local organizations.

One of the objectives of the advertising campaign was to create a brand image for the new service, focusing on convenience and amenities. The convenience aspect touts the ease and time savings of using Latrobe versus going to Pittsburgh, and the amenities focus is the free parking available at Latrobe.

It is noteworthy that "redundancy of message" was the advertising focus of the task force. In practical terms, this meant that rather than full-page newspaper advertisements a few times a year, the task force opted for smaller ads that were run weekly. For radio, the task force opted for four 15-second commercials instead of one 60-second spot.

### 14.3.6 SUMMARY—LESSONS LEARNED

One of the most important lessons was the focus on the “education” that was required for both the community as a whole and the business community in particular. For the community, the critical message was the importance of air service to the economic well-being of the region. For the business community educational message, the focus was on how important these businesses were to any potential air carrier and how their support was critical to its ultimate success once the new service began.

In many cases, it is *assumed* by airport management that the community recognizes the important role air service plays in the area’s economy. It is also *assumed* that the business community recognizes its importance in the air service process as well. Neither of these assumptions should be made without a great deal of forethought.

The second critical lesson is the recognition that other members of the community can be instrumental in getting the necessary support for the new service. Task force members and airport management can lend credibility to the project as a whole and provide much needed expertise in specific areas (e.g., media channels and key contacts with business leaders).

But the entire process begins with a realistic self-assessment of the community’s strengths and weaknesses and how to capitalize on the strengths and address the weaknesses.

### 14.3.7 ADVICE AND SUMMARY OFFERED BY LATROBE AIRPORT MANAGEMENT

“There is a sense of pride from Airport management that is a well known fact. Every Airport manager in this country knows his or her airport inside and out. There is seldom a question that can’t be answered on any issue inside those fences. Take the time to learn about the airlines’ position and what they have to deal with. Take the time to know your community and what makes them tick. Low prices are good but if they don’t keep the airline profitable or at least breaking even, they are not going to stick around. Every day there is a need to question “what will make this operation better?” not only for the airport but for the airline, the passenger, and the employees. Empower your people and community to make a difference, and don’t be afraid to tell them the truth. They can make informed decisions as long as you stay honest. And by all means, don’t take it personal, you may have a 95% load factor 7 days a week and the airline may still need to make a reduction. You just never know.” (Gabe Monzo, Airport Manager, 2007)

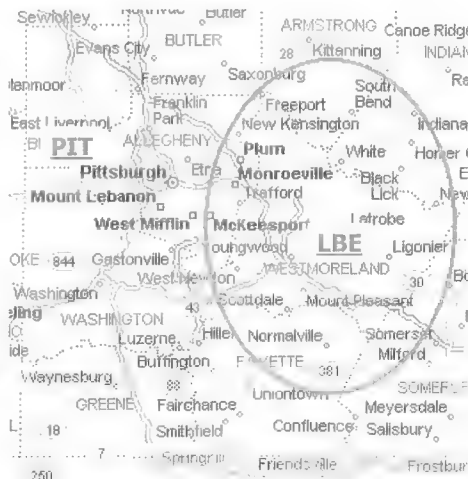
Exhibit 14.1—Portions of Latrobe Marketing Brochure.



### Latrobe: A Potent New Market Opportunity

#### A Pittsburgh Metro Area Airport

- Perfect location on the eastern edge of the Pittsburgh metro area
- 43 miles to downtown Pittsburgh
- 63 miles on congested roadways to Pittsburgh International
- Catchment population of over 370,000 (circled area)
- Eastern edge of Pittsburgh suburbs is closer to LBE than to PIT



## Exhibit 14.1—Continued.

**Latrobe: Strong Business Travel Demand****Key Latrobe Area Travel Generators**

- **Sony**
  - Maintains a Technology Center at Latrobe
  - Over 2,000 Employees
  - Production Site For High End Digital TVs
- **Timken Latrobe Steel**
  - Producer Of Specialty Steel Products
  - HQ in England
- **Kennametal**
  - Global Supplier of complex tools & components
  - World HQ at LBE Airport
  - Facilities in 14 states and 11 countries
  - Annual sales 2.3 billion, travel budget \$4.5 million
- **Master-Lee**
  - Nuclear Energy Management Services Firm
  - World HQ at LBE Airport
  - Offices in 5 states and global travel needs
  - Annual travel budget \$500,000
- **Alcoa Technical Center**
  - Aluminum products manufacturing



- 3 -

Source: Arnold Palmer Regional Airport

# CHAPTER 15

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Why do I need to market?** Whether or not you know it, you are already marketing through your interactions with your customers and the community. This Guidebook will help you do it better.

**I have no budget; what can I do?** Some of the most effective marketing involves no out-of-pocket cost. Through “earned marketing,” the airport receives publicity from newspaper articles and radio and television reports. Speeches and press releases may also generate effective marketing for the airport. These are just some examples of marketing you can do without a marketing budget.

**Is there a standard marketing program I can use?** Your marketing program needs to address the particular issues your airport faces, which will vary from airport to airport. The Guidebook takes you through the process of identifying those issues and provides examples of marketing programs that other airports have used.

**What type of advertising is best?** There is no single type of advertising that is best. It depends on your particular issues. However, the Guidebook provides a ranking of different methods of advertising from least expensive to most expensive and describes which methods small airport managers believe are most effective.

**Is this all about air service?** No. Small airports market for multiple reasons. Some of the most important reasons are to retain existing tenants, attract new ones, improve relations with airport neighbors, and obtain funding.

**Do I need to hire a consultant?** It depends what your marketing issues are and what you need to accomplish. Increasing community support for the airport may be something you can accomplish with your own staff and help from local businesses, media, and business associations. On the other hand, a program to persuade your airline to change its airfares may well require outside advice.

**How do I measure success?** You should measure the effectiveness of your marketing efforts, but this does not necessarily mean taking expensive polls or surveys. A number of low cost methods of measuring success are described in the Guidebook.

**We operate a small airport in the shadow of a much larger airport. Realistically, is there anything we can do?** The Arnold Palmer Airport case study is one example of a small commercial service airport operating in the shadow of a much larger airport. The airport developed a marketing plan that relied heavily on community support to regain air service that it had lost.

**How do I get started?** The Guidebook provides a relatively painless seven-step approach to developing a marketing plan. Try it!

# CHAPTER 16

## GLOSSARY

There is no shortage of marketing jargon. To avoid confusion, the main terms and concepts used in this Guidebook are defined as follows.

**Action Plan:** An action plan describes the actions intended to achieve the stated goals and objectives. It has three major elements: (1) **specific tasks**—what will be done and by whom, (2) **schedule**—when it will be done, (3) **resource allocation**—which staff or volunteers will complete the task and what funds will cover the cost.

**Advertising:** Advertising is a form of communication designed to persuade potential airport passengers, pilots, or companies to purchase or to use airport facilities or services. Airport advertising is typically paid promotions.

**Branding/Identity:** Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated identity for the airport that attracts and retains loyal customers.

**Earned Media:** Earned media refers to favorable publicity gained through an article in the newspaper or an interview on television or a radio station. Unlike paid advertising, earned media coverage often carries more credibility in the minds of consumers because the information is delivered and received through the filter of a credible news organization. Earned media is NOT free. Significant effort, persistence, and follow-up are required to successfully generate and sustain earned media coverage.

**Marketing Goals:** Marketing goals are general statements by an airport concerning what it wants and expects to accomplish in the future.

**Marketing Plan:** A marketing plan is the written document that describes the marketing activities that the airport will undertake in the next year. The marketing plan serves as a road map for members of the marketing team. It identifies the marketing goals for the next year, the airport's target audiences, the messages the airport intends to communicate, an action plan, and a budget. The marketing plan is typically a comprehensive document that provides an overview to anyone joining the marketing team. Consequently, the plan also includes a discussion of the airport's current position: levels of activity, major tenants and customers, competitive position, and general trends in the aviation sectors where the airport is active.

**Message:** A marketing message engages a particular target audience and answers the questions: what is the airport offering in terms of services and facilities, what makes the airport dramatically different from others, and what is in it for the customer and why should they choose this particular airport.

**Mission:** An airport's mission is its reason for existing: its function and purpose. Mission statements typically emphasize an airport's core values, identity, and competencies.

**Networking:** Networking is the skill and act of building alliances and important relationships over time through various means.

**Objectives:** Marketing objectives are defined as realistic and measurable targets established to evaluate and track progress during the implementation of the marketing plan. Objectives are consistent with statements of goals but much more specific.

**Public Relations:** Public relations is the practice of managing the flow of information between the airport and various audiences such as the community, stakeholders, and the public.

**Stakeholders:** Airport stakeholders include individuals, groups, or organizations that have a stake in the outcome of an airport decision or action.

**Strategy:** Strategy is the overall plan that an airport will use to achieve a particular marketing goal and its objectives.

**SWOT Analysis:** SWOT Analysis is a method used by airports to clarify the future direction of the airport by identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the airport. SWOT takes into consideration both internal and external factors influencing how an airport functions and who is its customer base.

**Tactics:** Tactics are the actionable steps taken to implement a particular strategy.

**Target Audience:** In marketing campaigns, airports identify specific groups to influence with a particular marketing tactic. These groups are the target audience.

# CHAPTER 17

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Aehle, Yvette M.** Positive Public Relations in a Single-Carrier Marketplace [Report]. American Association of Airport Executives, Washington, D.C., Jan. 1999, 59 pages. In this paper, Ms. Aehle provides a framework for addressing public relations issues faced in the single-carrier marketplace. Topics addressed include (1) common public perceptions about single carrier airports; (2) the media's role in shaping that perception, and (3) public relations strategies and tactics available to airport managers that can improve the visibility of the airport in the community and increase understanding about fare structure and schedules associated with single-carrier markets.

**Andreasen, Alan R., and Kotler, Philip.** *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations* [Book]. Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2003, 536 pages. This book seeks to position marketing as perhaps the most critical discipline needed for nonprofit success, and that success ultimately requires the ability to influence behavior in a wide range of key target markets including clients, funders, policy makers, volunteers, the media, and the organization's own staff. There are five sections to this book structured as follows: Section 1—Developing a Customer Orientation, Section 2—Strategic Planning and Organization, Section 3—Developing and Organizing Resources, Section 4—Designing the Marketing Mix, and Section 5—Controlling Marketing Strategies. Topics of special interest to the nonprofit sector include a lengthy discussion on generating funds and attracting human resources including staff and volunteers. Chapter 20, Marketing Evaluation, Monitoring, and Control, reviews different methods for evaluating the level of success of a particular marketing campaign or strategy.

**Aviation Youth Resources—Information Clearinghouse** [Online]. Washington State Department of Transportation, Jan. 5, 2008 (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/InfoClearinghouse/YouthResources.htm>).

**Berry, Frances Stokes, and Wechsler, Barton.** State Agencies' Experience with Strategic Planning: Findings from a National Survey [Journal]. *Public Administration Review*. March/April 1995, pp. 159–168. This article provides an overview of strategic planning methods for public agencies. The findings are based on results from a national survey conducted to determine what strategic planning methods were used and how they were effective. The survey found that public agencies used strategic planning to (1) clarify agency directions and goals, (2) assist in policy and budget decision making, (3) enhance client and external relations, (4) improve internal management, (5) internally reorganize, and (6) improve delivery of services.

**Bradford, Robert.** *Simplified Strategic Planning: A No-Nonsense Guide for Busy People Who Want Results Fast!* [Book]. Chandler House Press, Worcester, MA, 2000, 239 pages. This book presents a streamlined methodology for developing business strategies and executable plans. In addition to details on the step-by-step methodology, templates for charting a course for companies to follow are included.



**Bureau of Aviation Education and Safety; Committee, Illinois Aviation Education Advisory.** A Guide for Supporting the Airport in Your Community [Report]. Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics, 1990, 92 pages. This report provides practical assistance for the development of a community education program to support your airport. Focus is given to the importance of effective communication, steps for good public relations, and aids for planning a program in your community.

**Conklin, Dave.** The Total Package: East Tennesseans for Airfare Competition & McGhee Tyson Airport's Incentive Program [Conference] . ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference, Pittsburg, PA, 2007. 15 pages. East Tennesseans for Airfare Competition (ETAC), a consortium of 30 businesses in the region, joined together as a grassroots effort to (1) address rising airfares at McGhee Tyson Airport and (2) find ways to attract low fare airlines to the airport. The group worked to raise awareness among individuals, small businesses, and corporations about options available to them. Actions taken by the group and outcomes achieved between 2002 and 2007 are included.

**Dillingham, Gerald L.** Commercial Aviation: Initial Small Community Air Service Development Projects Have Achieved Mixed Results [Report]. GAO, Washington, D.C., 2005, 84 pages. This report examines how the U.S. DOT has implemented the Small Community Air Service Development Program established in 2000, including goals and strategies used and results under its grants. The GAO reports that goals have varied among grantees, from adding flights and airlines to improving marketing, and the communities have also used various strategies, such as airline subsidies, hiring consultants, and marketing. The results have been mixed, with some achieving the goals they set, such as adding passenger enplanements. Other airports have failed to reach their target goals. However, the GAO encourages further evaluation as only a small percentage of the grantees had completed their programs at the time of the report.

**Dillingham, Gerald L.** Commercial Aviation: Programs and Options for Providing Air Service to Small Communities [Report]: GAO, Washington, D.C., 2007, 50 pages. This testimony examines the status and results of the Essential Air Service (EAS) and Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) programs as Congress considers the reauthorization of the FAA. The testimony raises concerns about the EAS program, citing the need to provide air service to communities that otherwise would not be able to sustain it. The testimony also raises concerns about the costs and efficiencies of the subsidies including the viability of future EAS service because the number of available small aircraft is declining. Evaluation of SCASD is on-going, but requests for these grants are declining. The testimony makes recommendations for reform to EAS and improved evaluation of SCASD that would improve effectiveness of both these programs.

**Eclat Consulting.** Michigan Air Service: Assessment and Strategy [Report]. Michigan Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics and Freight Services, Lansing, MI, 2005. This report examines whether Michigan's residents have effective air service, what impact Northwest's restructuring is likely to have on the state's airports, and what the prospects are for service to small and mid-sized communities. Chapters 6 and 7 detail the specific attributes of the remotely located small airports and the smaller airports, respectively. Chapters 11 and 12 explain the air service tools and strategies available to the state and recommends those tools most useful to Michigan airports.

**Eclat Consulting.** Pennsylvania Air Service: Assessment and Strategy [Report]. Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aviation, Harrisburg, PA, 2004, 141 pages. Chapters 4 and 5 of this report focus on the specific challenges facing air service to small airports including an explanation of the economics of airlines serving small airports. Chapter 11 details air service development principles and their application to Pennsylvania airports including community programs and tactics that have been proven successful. Chapter 12 discusses

federal and state options for funding, especially for small airports, and Chapter 13 discusses the role Pennsylvania can play in its own air service initiatives including marketing strategies.

**Educator's Corner.** [Online]. Federal Aviation Administration, Jan. 5, 2008. [http://www.faa.gov/education/educator\\_resources/educators\\_corner/](http://www.faa.gov/education/educator_resources/educators_corner/). This webpage is part of the official FAA website. It is a resource for youth educators to use when looking for ways to introduce aviation concepts to students and a means to promote community interest in aviation. The site also provides links to (1) the AOPA Pilots and Teachers Handbook (PATH) to Aviation; (2) NASA Smart Skies Air Traffic Simulator to teach distance-rate-time problems to grades 5 through 9; (3) NCAE Aviation Education Resource Matrix—a website containing aviation education information and events for all private and governmental businesses; (4) 2005 National Aviation Magnet School Survey, and (5) grade and age specific experiments and activities.

**Ellis, Susan J.** *The Volunteer Recruitment and Membership Development Book* [Book]. Energize, Inc., Philadelphia, PA, 2002, 152 pages. Volunteer recruitment is one element in a broader picture of how your organization wants to function in the larger community. This guidebook focuses on how to recruit volunteers for your organization. Specific attention is given to (1) where to look for volunteers (finding fresh sources of volunteers in your community); (2) techniques for recruitment (developing specific recruitment tools and techniques that work); (3) appealing to special target audiences; (4) alternatives to recruitment; (5) how to get members to volunteer; and (6) how to use the Internet to support your recruitment efforts including how to use your organization's website as a tool to attract volunteers.

**Gibson, John.** Marketing Small Airports in a Big Way! John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport [Conference]. ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, 2008, 37 pages. This PowerPoint presentation was presented at the ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference in 2008. Hamilton International Airport is located 50 minutes from downtown Toronto and 50 minutes from Niagara Falls. Airport management realized that to increase passengers, the airport needed to raise awareness in the community. Mr. Gibson presents how the airport developed a new brand and launched an extensive marketing campaign in the region.

**Guide to Obtaining Community Support for Your Local Airport—Public Relations Plan for Airports** [Online]. AOPA, Frederick, MD. Jan. 2008. <http://www.aopa.org/asn/apsup02.html>. This excerpt from The Guide to Obtaining Community Support for Your Local Airport is accessible on the AOPA website. Focus is on how to develop and launch an airport public relations campaign including how to muster community involvement, political action, and media relations to positively influence public opinion around airport issues. Things to consider include (1) get the facts—compare the goals of the airport with those of the community; (2) understand public opinion—does the airport have opponents in the community on a specific airport matter and what is their view; (3) take action to improve public opinion about the airport and communicate the steps taken through different forms of media; and (4) community outreach—build public support by providing a program for local civic organizations.

**Hazel, Robert.** Small Airports and Air Service Development [Conference]. ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, June 2005. This presentation examines challenges that small airports face when recruiting air carriers. The presentation also outlines basic air service development tools that can be used and lessons learned regarding attracting air service to small communities.

**Hecker, JayEtta Z.** Commercial Aviation: Factors Affecting Efforts to Improve Air Service at Small Community Airports [Report]. GAO, Washington, D.C., Jan. 2003, 90 pages. Small communities experience many challenges

to attract and retain air service. Small populations and limited economic activity restrain passenger demand and thus makes these markets less attractive to a carrier than a larger city. The next larger cities also experience challenges to provide air service at competitive prices and, if these cities are near larger metropolitan areas, diversion of passengers to the larger airport further handicaps efforts to increase air service. In this report, the GAO found that financial incentives were the most effective way to attract new air service; however, when financial incentives ended, longer term sustainability of the new service was more likely in communities that made retention of air service a top priority.

**Hodiak, Diane L.** *Fund Raising & Marketing in the One-Person Shop: Achieving Success with Limited Resources* [Book]. 4th edition, Development Resource Center, Seattle, WA, 2002, 189 pages. This guidebook's primary focus is on fund raising and marketing in the non-profit sector. Strategies and techniques are offered for overcoming challenges faced by organizations with scarce human and financial resources. Specific topics covered are (1) volunteer recruitment and management; (2) networking; (3) how to create a successful web-site; (4) organizational self-assessment including SWOT analysis; (5) building a successful marketing campaign; and (6) cost savings (e.g., cultivating in-kind contributions). Case studies from the Ronald McDonald House, the Emergency Food Shelf, and the Mayo Clinic are included.

**Jarach, David.** *Airport Marketing: Strategies to Cope With the New Millennium Environment* [Book]. Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, VT, 2005, 140 pages. This book presents two core areas of in-depth analysis of current airport management practices: aviation-related activities and non-aviation-related activities. Chapter 1 reviews the role and scope of activity of the "airport enterprise." Chapter 2 describes the air transport value chain. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the Airport Enterprise's Strategic Business Unit (SBU) and how it has changed over time from a physical airport structure serving flying customers to a broader aviation-related SBU where best in-class players are moving from a mono-modal approach to co-evolutionary designs with other transportation solutions. Chapter 5 looks at the development of the "non-aviation-related" value proposition and the new "commercial airport" concept where airport infrastructures evolve into more sophisticated marketing entities that are described as "multipoint service-provider firms" resulting in a new set of potential customers. Chapter 6 describes the importance of customer loyalty in achieving sustainable growth for the "commercial airport" concept. Chapter 7 focuses on constructing an airport marketing plan using a four-phased approach including (1) assessment, (2) definition of goals, (3) implementation of objectives, and (4) auditing of financial results. Chapter 8 briefly discusses the impact of 9/11 on increased security measures, and Chapter 9 provides a high level comparison of U.S. airport performance (2002) with other countries (passenger movements and cargo).

**Kotler, Philip.** *According to Kotler: the World's Foremost Authority on Marketing Answers to Your Questions* [Book]. AMACON, a division of American Management Association, New York, NY, 2005, 168 pages. General marketing information is presented in this book using a "frequently asked questions" structure. Using this question/answer format, Part 1 provides an overview of marketing concepts, traditional marketing techniques, and a review of new marketing trends and tools. Part 2 describes different marketing strategies including segmentation, targeting, positioning, differentiation, and innovation. Part 3 describes available marketing tools (the 4 Ps); product, price, place, and promotion. Part 4 answers questions about marketing planning including a discussion on conducting market research. Part 5 includes information about the role and structure of the marketing organization, and Part 6 offers suggestions on how to measure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and efforts. Part 7 is about marketing areas of application including suggestions for small-business marketing, direct marketing, Internet marketing, and other special situations and approaches.

**Little, Helen.** *Volunteers: How to Get Them, How to Keep Them* [Book]. Panacea Press, Naperville, IL, 1999, 128 pages. This manual is structured around the 12 basic needs of every volunteer, and how they impact management's ability to recruit and retain volunteers for its organization. Topics of relevance include (1) recruiting volunteers, (2) managing volunteer expectations, (3) volunteer training, and (4) getting projects done on time using volunteers.

**McNamara, Carter.** *Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation* [Book]. Authenticity Consulting, LLC, Minneapolis, MN, 2003. This guidebook focuses on nonprofit organizations and government departments embarking on a strategic plan: how to customize strategies suited to achieving specific goals and objectives. Comprehensive practical tools to conduct an internal analysis of your organization and compare results to best practices in nonprofit organizations are included. Worksheets are provided to identify and organize the most important information about all aspects of the strategic planning process.

**Minton, Paul A.S.** Translating Vision Into Action: 8 Steps to Communicate Your Strategy [Journal]. *Course and Direction*. April 1999, 5 pages. This article summarizes the steps to take to complete a simplified strategic plan and references the templates and worksheets cited in the guidebook, *Simplified Strategic Planning: A No Nonsense Guide for Busy People Who Want Results Fast!* The assumption is that for strategic planning to be effective, organizations must not only craft a winning strategy and implementation plan, but must align the actions of the organization's people with the course and direction of the plan. The eight steps to successful strategic planning include (1) data gathering, (2) who needs to act, (3) what actions need to be taken, (4) the information they need to effectively act, (5) communication strategies, (6) delivering the message, (7) verifying that the audience understands the message, and (8) reinforcing communications periodically.

**Noll-Williams, Nicole.** Marketing Small Airports in a Big Way [Conference]. ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, 2008, 23 pages. This PowerPoint presentation was delivered by Nicole Noll-Williams, Director of Regional Market Development for Capital Region International Airport, at the ACI-NA Marketing and Communications Conference held in June 2008. It describes how the airport, located in Lansing Michigan, developed a two-tier marketing strategy to promote utilization through (1) an enhanced multifaceted website and (2) broad-based community involvement through the development of a Regional Business Travel Trust. Traditional branding techniques were used including development of two complementary logos and taglines, as well as attractive and consistent design features for the website and other marketing materials (e.g., direct mail, billboards, TV ads, etc.). The website was designed to (1) appeal to business as well as leisure travelers, (2) provide frequent informational updates to keep the website current, (3) highlight promotions and press releases about the airport, and (4) secure personal data. Through the Regional Business Travel Trust, key executives in the area were brought together to endorse and sign up corporations in the region to participate in the trust. The website was used to support the application process for companies and business travelers interested in participating in the trust. Lessons learned included (1) the airport was able to build on existing strengths, (2) the website development was a worthwhile investment, (3) the focus is now on a broader range of services, and (4) flying is now connected to the larger business and economic development in the region.

**Olislagers, Robert.** Factors Vital to General Aviation: A Case for Economic Stability and Growth [Conference]. 32nd FAA Annual Forecast Conference. Washington, D.C., Mar. 16, 2007, 13 pages. The focus of this PowerPoint presentation is on key factors that influence investment at Centennial Airport including location, understanding return on investment (ROI), stabilizing airport costs, and implementing and enforcing realistic standards and consistent policies. The presentation concludes with the economic results that have been achieved at Centennial Airport through implementation of these key factors.

**Rudolph, Jim.** Branding Edmonton International Airport [Conference]. ACI–NA Marketing and Communications Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, 2008, 11 pages. This PowerPoint presentation was delivered by Jim Rudolph, Manager of Corporate Communications, Edmonton Regional Airports Authority. Inspired by “a new vision and desire to reflect a bolder, more confident Edmonton,” the airport authority underwent a rebranding effort. Driven by the need for a new market position as an emerging hub, the airport also wanted to create a new core message that would enhance its marketing and communications effectiveness. The rebranding timeline, from conception to implementation, spanned 18 months, and major activities included (1) initial surveying and analysis of the survey results; (2) development of a findings and recommendations report; (3) establishing a brand plan and timeline; (4) brand development and testing by focus groups, consumers, and partners; (5) internal and external brand launch; (6) marketing brand alignment; and (7) marketing collateral development. Keys to success included (1) using research to instill credibility throughout the process; (2) including staff from outside the marketing communications realm to increase internal staff “buy-in” of the rebrand; and (3) focus on strategy—the reason for the rebrand rather than just the design features or new “look.”

**Stern, Gary L.** *Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations: Mobilize People for Marketing Success* [Book]. Vol. II, Fieldstone Alliance, St. Paul, MN, 2001. This workbook was written to provide guidance on how to recruit and effectively manage volunteers. While it was directed at non-profit organizations, many of the ideas and suggestions are applicable to small airports, which often make use of volunteers to implement marketing events and campaigns.

**Teitelman, Judith.** Hello Real World: Understanding Current Realities or How to Conduct An Organizational Self-Assessment [Online]. National Endowment for the Arts, Jan. 6, 2008. <http://www.nea.gov/resources/Lessons/TEITELMAN.HTML>. This article provides a framework and techniques for conducting an organizational self-assessment as part of the larger strategic planning process in the nonprofit arena. Information is provided on how to conduct a SWOT Analysis with specific focus on data collection methodologies including sample survey questions, focus group questions, and board and staff self-assessment questionnaires.

**Van Auken, Kristie.** Akron-Canton Airport: A Better Way To Go [Conference]. ACI–NA Marketing and Communications Conference, Austin, TX, 2006, 14 pages. This PowerPoint presentation describes how Akron-Canton Airport has used marketing concepts and messages to promote the airport and air services to the general public as follows (1) use community champions such as the the local chamber of commerce and travel advisory boards (e.g., corporate travel managers) to increase awareness about local air services; (2) use technology to reach your target market (e.g., blog port on the Internet); (3) stress the specific amenities your airport has to offer (e.g., massage chairs, restaurant, etc.); and (4) stay true to your marketing brand promises (e.g., Price + Experience = A Better Way to Go).

**Whited, Bradley S.** A Study of Public Relations At Cortland County Airport [Report]. Dutchess County Airport, Wappingers Falls, NY, 1982, 20 pages. This case study reviews the issues faced by Cortland County Airport-Chase Field to gain community support for improvements to the airfield. Specific community objections the development and implementation of a public relations plan focused on improving the image of the airport to the community, and the resulting outcomes are described in detail. Conclusions drawn include (1) that public relations is an on-going process, and not something that is done once or for a short period of time; and (2) that establishing good communications is a critical component of any effective public relations campaign.

# CHAPTER 18

## AIRPORT SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 General Aviation Airports
- 18.3 Commercial Service Airports

This chapter summarizes the methodology and findings from surveys of general aviation and small commercial service airports that were undertaken for this study.

### 18.1 INTRODUCTION

The research team identified a sample of general aviation and commercial service airports that were (a) potential users of the Guidebook, (b) airports that had experienced growth since 2000, and/or (c) airports that had positive marketing experiences.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand more about the marketing experience of small airports and to uncover “best practices” of marketing techniques that are useful for small airports. In the case of larger airports, the ACRP Project 01-04 panel instructed the team to investigate the “scalability” of their marketing programs.

A total of 36 airports were sent an initial letter under TRB letterhead explaining the project and inviting participation in the interviews. Letters were followed by telephone calls to schedule an interview. Airports had the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire before the interview or during the interview. The response rate was excellent with 16 out of 21 general aviation airports responding and 12 of 15 commercial service airports responding.

Two teams conducted the interviews. KRAMER aerotek, inc., handled the general aviation airports and Oliver Wyman handled the commercial service airports. As it turned out, a few airports in both groups had recently lost air service and reinstatement of the service was top on their list of marketing priorities.

Since the marketing focus for general aviation airports and commercial service airports is different, we report interview results separately. Section 18.2 reports on the results from interviews with general aviation airports. Section 18.3 reports on the results from interviews with commercial service airports.

### 18.2 GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

#### 18.2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE SIZE

Twenty-one general aviation airports were selected for this study, representing small, medium, and large general aviation airports from across the United States to better understand marketing challenges, activities, successes, and patterns. Of the 21 airports contacted, 16 agreed to participate in the survey and are listed in Exhibit 18.1.

Each airport was called and sent a survey to complete and return. A telephone interview was conducted the day following receipt of the survey to clarify answers and delve into specific issues. Telephone interviews typically lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour.

**Exhibit 18.1—General Aviation Airports Participating in ACRP Project 01-04 Interviews.**

ID	Participating Airports	State	2007	
			Based Aircraft	Operations
APA	Centennial Airport	CO	709	321,804
CHD	Chandler Municipal Airport	AZ	449	268,093
LGU	Logan-Cache Airport	UT	146	173,197
FIT	Fitchburg Municipal Airport	MA	146	168,025
CRG	Craig Municipal Airport	FL	319	163,174
ISM	Kissimmee Gateway Airport	FL	206	148,523
GXY	Greeley-Weld County Airport	CO	223	143,000
MGJ	Orange County Airport	NY	243	133,888
EUL	Caldwell Industrial Airport	ID	390	132,888
HUM	Houma-Terrebonne	LA	109	122,523
ASH	Nashua Municipal Airport	NH	441	117,907
SNS	Salinas Municipal Airport	CA	229	73,773
HGR	Hagerstown Regional Airport, Richard A. Henson Field	MD	163	48,475
BQK	Glynn County Airport Commission	GA	58	22,233
SLN	Salina Municipal Airport	KS	137	17,145
DUJ	Dubois Regional Airport	PA	26	15,282

Sources: Airport IQ, 5010 Reports, and FAA Terminal Area Forecasts

### 18.2.2 GENERAL FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS

- When it comes to marketing, airport managers are likely to use the resources and networks already established. Since airport managers have many duties, marketing activities also strongly correlate with the pursuit of their own particular interests, for example, scouting, student projects, air shows, charity events, and so forth.
- Airport managers view their three principal assets at the airport as (1) the airfield (runways and taxiways), (2) fuel, and (3) property. Demand for these assets and how they are managed dictates development and marketing opportunities.
- When managers have a strong sense of “airport stewardship,” they also have a more directed marketing program. Airport managers that viewed their airport as part of the community understood clearly the role of the airport in the community and the region. This role dictated the marketing activities.
- Several airport managers emphasized the importance of developing a vision or plan for the airport whether formal or informal and then executing that plan.
- Airports extend market reach by cultivating and relying on airport champions in the community. These champions typically include the chamber of commerce, the local economic development organization, or a local university or college. These groups broaden the airport manager’s ability to market the airport.
- Most managers articulated the importance of reaching out beyond the fence of the airport to better serve the community and to establish critical political allies.



- Marketing and public relations directed at sustaining and improving tenant relations is a different audience than marketing to the community at large. The value of air shows and open houses drew a mixed response. Some managers felt that these events attract existing supporters to the airport. Sponsorship of totally non-airport events sometimes has the effect of garnering new support and friends of the airport.
- Airports interviewed that had lost air service are under considerable community pressure to reinstate that service. This translates to a much higher marketing priority placed on carrier recruitment than on general aviation marketing. Proportionally, many more resources are dedicated to air service development than to general aviation marketing, even for airports with robust general aviation and industrial activity.
- Two types of marketing tools stood out as effective and inexpensive: earned media and websites. Earned media occurs when an airport takes an action to generate news or to attract journalists. Airport managers viewed earned media such as press releases and newspaper or magazine articles as effective, low cost marketing tools to improve the public image of the airport and advertise upcoming events at the airport.
- Websites have been embraced by airports as a necessary marketing tool. Some airports direct all their advertising to the website. But the websites have to be good. Perceived effectiveness is directly related to an airport's ability to keep the website current. Airport webpages embedded in city or county websites are perceived to be less effective as a marketing tool than stand-alone airport websites.

### 18.2.3 RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS ON SURVEY

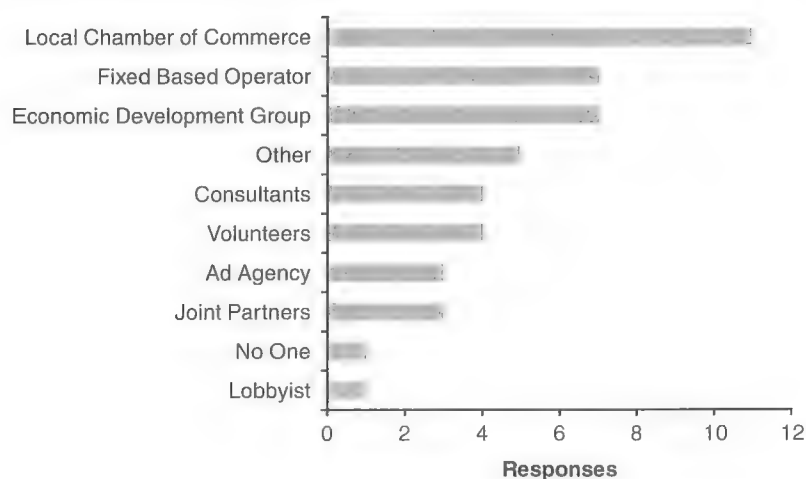
#### SECTION 1—MARKETING AT YOUR AIRPORT

---

- **Marketing Responsibility**—15 out of the 16 airport managers or marketing executives that were interviewed reported having overall responsibility for the marketing activities at their airport. The one manager with fewer marketing responsibilities works for Craig Airport, which is managed by the Jacksonville Airport Authority. The authority centrally handles marketing for Craig, the two other general aviation airports, and Jacksonville International Airport.
- **Internal Marketing Staff Resources**—13 of the 16 airports surveyed have no direct marketing staff members. They either do all the marketing themselves or with some administrative support.
- **External Marketing Resources**—The airports use a variety of external resources for marketing support (see Exhibit 18.2). The most common are the local chambers of commerce, the economic development organizations, and the FBOs. These groups help fund marketing activities, staff events, and provide new business leads. Airports also often use resources at local colleges and universities for airport economic impact studies, business plans, or marketing plans.



### Exhibit 18.2—External Resources General Aviation Airports Use for Marketing, Lead Generation, and Volunteers.

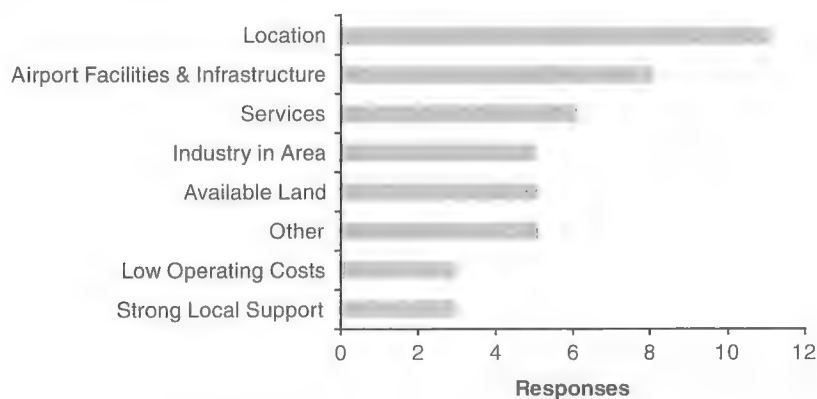


Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

## SECTION 2—YOUR AIRPORT'S TOP MARKETING GOALS

**Perceived Airport Strengths**—Airport managers reported location, facilities and infrastructure, and services offered at the airport as the top strengths (see Exhibit 18.3).

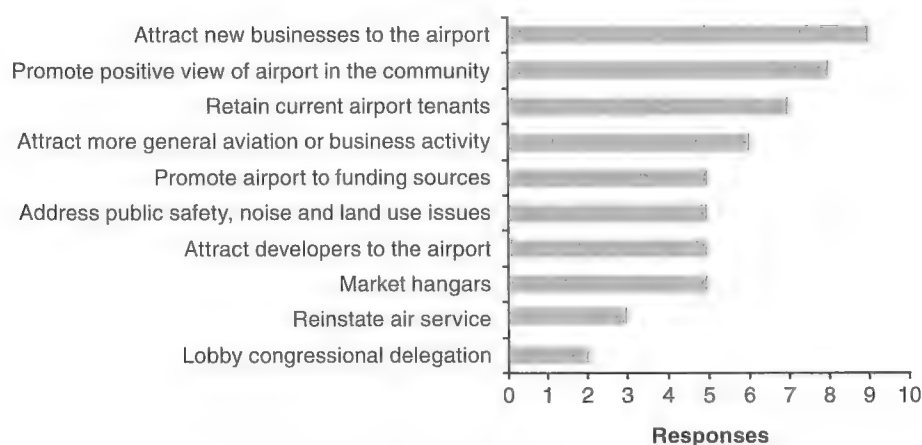
### Exhibit 18.3—Perceived Airport Strengths.



Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

**Marketing Goals/Priorities of Your Airport**—This question had two parts: first, identify marketing goals and then identify the top three marketing priorities (see Exhibit 18.4). Interestingly, goals were expressed mostly in terms of attracting new business to the airport. However, public image ranked high as a marketing/public relations priority.

### Exhibit 18.4—Marketing Priorities.



Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

**Most Time/Money Spent on Marketing**—Respondents were asked to identify the top three marketing priorities and also to indicate the three areas where they spend the most money and the most time. Exhibit 18.5 summarizes the results.

### Exhibit 18.5—Top Ranking Priorities, Most Money, and Most Time.

	Priority	Most Money	Most Time
Attract new businesses to the airport	9	7	7
Promote positive view of airport in the community	8	7	13
Retain current airport tenants	7	4	3
Attract more general aviation or business activity	6	5	2
Promote airport to funding sources	5	0	5
Address public safety, noise and land use issues	5	4	6
Attract developers to the airport	5	3	6
Market hangars	5	1	1
Reinstate air service	3	4	3
Lobby congressional delegation	2	2	2

Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

**What Influenced Your Marketing Goals**—9 of the 16 airport managers reported that an existing strategic or business plan was the basis for establishing their marketing goals and, in some cases, was augmented by a SWOT analysis or a customer satisfaction survey. Eleven of the 16 airport managers indicated that marketing goals developed as a response to an “urgent situation” that required attention. These situations included the need to respond to community growth/expansion, the need to change the community’s perception of the airport, the drive to keep the airport self-sufficient, and the desire for commercial service.

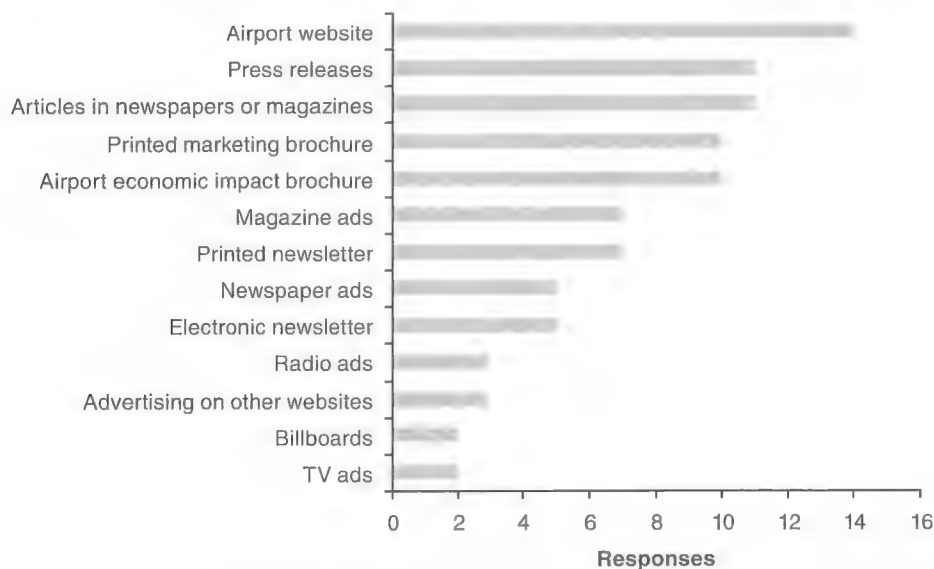
### SECTION 3—MARKETING TOOLS YOUR AIRPORT USES

**General Observations**—Most of the airport managers interviewed have limited financial resources to spend on marketing. Therefore, they try to spend their marketing dollars expeditiously and on tools that “will work.” The most popular marketing tools among those interviewed include “earned media” such as press releases and newspaper and magazine articles that get the word out at a limited cost to the airport. Also included in the less costly but effective category were an economic impact or marketing brochure completed and/or paid for by the local economic development group, chamber, or university. Almost all the airports have a website and believe it to be effective if maintained, but not effective if not maintained. Those airports seeking to attract or maintain commercial air service spend significant marketing dollars on more traditional advertising tools such as TV and radio spots, print ads, and billboards to attract passengers. These more traditional marketing tools are not used by general aviation airports because they are perceived to be expensive and not effective for reaching general aviation audiences. Almost all airport managers surveyed do some form of networking, and many do multiple forms of networking on a regular basis.

**Marketing Tools Your Airport Did Not Use**—The marketing tools not used by general aviation airports were television ads, radio ads, billboards, ads on websites, and newspaper and magazine ads.

**Marketing Tools Your Airport Used Either a Lot or Somewhat**—The most frequent tools used were airport websites, followed by press releases, articles, printed brochures, and economic impact brochures (see Exhibit 18.6).

**Exhibit 18.6—Marketing Tools Used A Lot or Somewhat.**



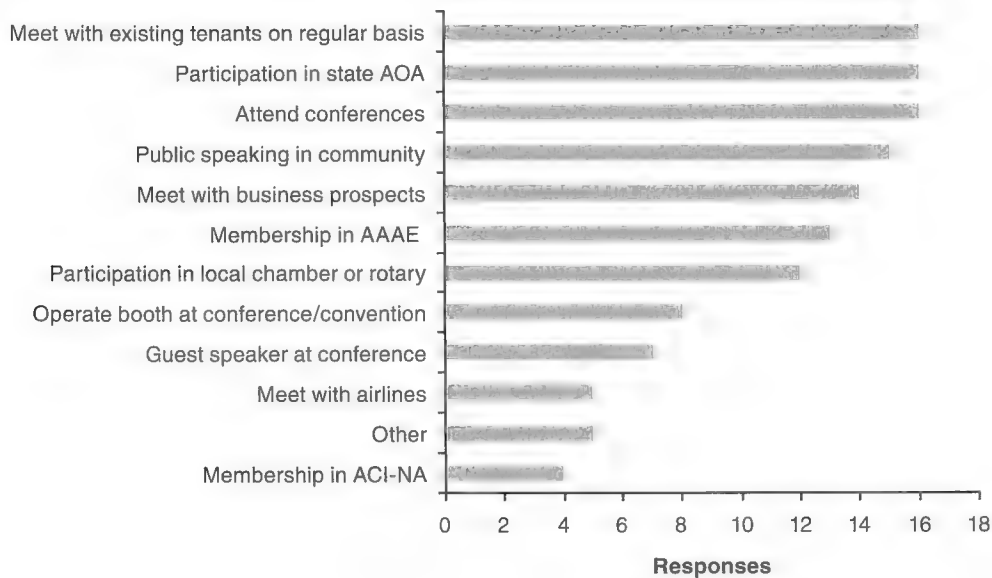
Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

**Marketing Tools You Found to Be Effective**—Airport managers also reported that the airport website was most effective, followed by press releases and articles.

**Networking Activities in Which You Have Participated**—Most managers spend time networking. This question generated one of the highest response rates as Exhibit 18.7 shows. Interestingly, although meeting with business

prospects and existing tenants was ranked low in terms of taking time, it was the highest ranked networking activity.

#### Exhibit 18.7—Networking Activities.



Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

**Networking Activities You Have Found to Be Effective or Somewhat Effective**—Airport managers reported meeting with business prospects and tenants to be their most effective networking activities, followed by public speaking engagements, participation in the state AOA, chamber of commerce and Rotary clubs, AAE membership, and attending conferences.

**Conferences That Are Most Useful to Attend (with or without a Booth)**—Of those attending conferences, seven airport managers reported AAE conferences to be the most useful to attend, while six airport managers reported NBAA conferences as the most useful conference to attend. Other useful conferences (but to a lesser extent) included statewide airport association conferences, MRO, AOPA, and Jumpstart. Even fewer respondents have a booth at conferences because of the cost and perceived lack of effectiveness of the booth. Of those who do have a booth, the National NBAA Conference was most often mentioned as useful. Two respondents found having a booth at NBAA to be extremely effective for them. Another manager has given up the booth in favor of appointments and networking at NBAA.

## SECTION 4—HOW YOUR AIRPORT MEASURES EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING

**General Observations**—This section of the survey received fewer overall responses than Sections 1 through 3, and there was no consensus regarding the best ways to measure overall effectiveness of marketing tools and networking activities. This is most likely true because measuring marketing effectiveness is difficult, time consuming, and expensive to do in a quantitative/scientific manner, and many survey respondents are resource constrained.

**Marketing Efforts and Supporting Tools That Have Worked At Your Airport**—Those airport managers that responded to this question found their airport website to be an effective way to keep tenants, business prospects, and other users of the airport informed and aware of current services and activities. They stressed that it is important to keep the website up to date, and to have a dedicated resource for this function. Several airports direct all their advertising back to their webpage. This saves time on the telephone with reporters and users who want general airport information. They also found different forms of networking to be effective. They ranked press releases and newspaper articles to be the most effective marketing tool, followed by either an economic impact brochure or airport specific marketing brochure. It is important to note that many of the respondents have used resources at the local college or university to complete an economic impact study on behalf of the airport.

**Least Effective Marketing Activities Done By Your Airport**—Airport managers surveyed felt very strongly, either pro or con, about the effectiveness of airport open houses or air shows. Some felt they were not effective at all and were very time consuming for a limited staff to manage, while others felt they were very effective and a great way to showcase the airport. The ability to muster volunteers to help manage the event was a key ingredient of a successful outcome. There were a range of other responses to this question, but little consensus.

**Promotional Events Your Airport Sponsors**—10 of the 16 airport managers sponsor some form of educational event or events at the airport to raise public awareness and improve the airport's image in the community. The specific type of event varied amongst those surveyed, but included such activities as Young Eagles, student tours of the airport, and safety seminars. Some of the less common but creative promotional events included partnering for charity events, chamber of commerce After Hours events, and the local symphony.

**Market Research Your Airport Has Conducted in the Past 5 Years**—A customer satisfaction survey is the most common form of market research conducted by those surveyed, but only 6 of the 16 respondents reported conducting such a survey. Also, those airports seeking commercial service have typically used outside consultants to complete market research for the airport.

**What Advice Would You Give Other Airports About Marketing**—6 of the 16 airport managers believe that you have to put time and resources into marketing your airport, and 5 of the 16 believe that some form of plan (formal or informal) and execution of that plan is important for success. Lastly, building relationships in the community is also an important ingredient for success.

**How Much Did You Spend On Marketing Last Year and What Was the Source of Funds**—The responses ranged from zero dollars to more than \$100,000 with small general aviation airports having little or no money to spend on marketing and the largest general aviation airports having sizeable budgets and dedicated resources (internal or external) to execute their marketing plans. Typically, the greatest amount of money was spent at those airports seeking to restore commercial service. Funds were used on more expensive forms of marketing such as print advertising, radio and television spots, and consulting services in support of securing commercial service. These funds typically came from airport operating budgets, followed by various types of grants.

## 18.3 COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS

### 18.3.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

The research team identified 15 commercial service airports for possible interviews based on the following factors:

- Geographic diversity within the lower 48 states
- Enplanements—small airports were selected

- Enplanement trends
  - Small airports that experienced passenger growth during the 2000–2007 period were selected
  - For the smallest airports, those that maintained passenger levels were selected because the average airport experienced a significant decline in passengers from 2000–2007,
- Airports known to have conducted innovative marketing programs

Of the 15 airports originally identified, 2 had lost commercial service since the end of 2006, and therefore these airports were not interviewed. Of the remaining 13 airports with commercial service, 11 participated in the interview process. In addition, Ft. Wayne was added as a result of favorable mention during the interviews.

The 12 airports interviewed ranged in size from approximately 3,000 annual enplanements to 600,000 enplanements. Nine of the airports had fewer than 100,000 enplanements. The larger airports were included primarily to help assess whether the techniques used there might also be applicable to the smaller airports that are the focus of this study (see Exhibit 18.8).

**Exhibit 18.8—Commercial Service Airports Surveyed.**

Airport	State	Code	2007 Enplanements
Bradford	Pennsylvania	BFD	3,037
Casper	Wyoming	CPR	75,191
DuBois	Pennsylvania	DUJ	7,168
Ft. Wayne	Indiana	FWA	286,259
Huntington	West Virginia	HTS	60,566
Huntsville	Alabama	HSV	605,855
Latrobe	Pennsylvania	LBE	13,406
Newport News	Virginia	PHF	512,536
North Platte	Nebraska	LBF	10,201
Rhinelander	Wisconsin	RHI	37,381
Shendoah Valley	Virginia	SHD	4,645
Tupelo	Mississippi	TUP	27,677

Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

### 18.3.2 FINDINGS

Although the number of airports interviewed was too small a sample to be statistically representative of small commercial service airports in the United States, the process yielded a number of useful findings.

#### MARKETING GOALS

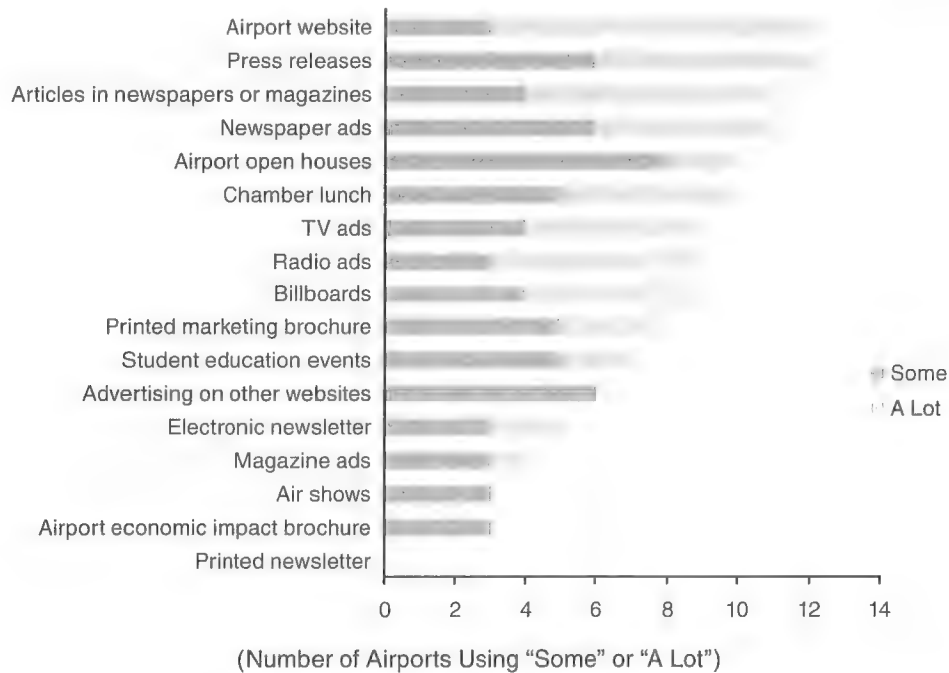
- Nearly all airports reported that their primary marketing goals related to air service development. Improving air service, attracting passengers, and retaining existing carriers are the three primary marketing goals of small commercial service airports.
- In connection with air service, a number of airports said specifically that raising “awareness” in the region was their primary focus. In other words, many area residents did not know that their local airport offered commercial air service, or assumed that the local service was not competitive with that offered at larger airports.

- The more general goal of promoting a positive view of the airport in the community is considered of equal importance to air service development, but is not ranked as high in terms of time devoted or money spent.
- The marketing goals ranking next in importance are attracting new businesses to the airport and attracting more general aviation.
- Slightly more airports placed greater importance on lobbying their congressional delegations than on attracting developers to the airport. This is likely to be a function of airports seeking help with Essential Air Service issues or federal grant funding.

## MARKETING TOOLS

- The airports used a wide range of marketing tools and had different opinions on which were most successful. As shown in Exhibit 18.9, most airports reported using a number of different tools.

**Exhibit 18.9—Marketing Tools Used by Airports Interviewed.**



Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

- Nearly all airports reported using their website, press releases, and articles in newspapers and magazines to help market the airport.

- Most also reported having open houses and chamber events to promote the airport. The chamber events were typically lunch or dinner meetings or cocktail parties.
- A majority made some use of newspaper ads, airport open houses, chamber lunches, television and radio ads, billboards, and student education events.
- Very few reported using magazine ads, air shows, or airport economic impact brochures, and none reported using a printed newsletter.

## EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

---

- Most airports reported that local press coverage was an effective marketing tool, as were meetings with local business and civic groups. One airport emphasized that issuing press releases leads to good radio and television coverage, and that the airport helped build good media relations by always having a story ready when the local media needed one.
- Several airports reported that they had conducted contests that were effective. These made use of radio, email, and Internet. One airport used a contest involving local travel agencies to encourage them to book travel at the local airport.
- Several airports were strong proponents of using billboards to increase awareness of the local airport. "You could be there now" was the theme of one campaign.
- Four respondents mentioned that they found newspaper advertising to be the least effective marketing medium.
- Two airports said that it was difficult to know which media were effective. One said that the airlines had the direct relationship with the customer and that the airport was only an intermediary with much less information.
- Radio elicited differing reactions. Some airports rated it among the least effective marketing vehicles. Others thought it useful for short-term impacts.
- Air shows drew mixed reactions. Many airports had sponsored air shows in the past but, in some cases, found them disruptive of operations. Many airports also conducted programs for students, the 4-H, Girl Scouts, or Boy Scouts.
- Overall, every airport contacted used a variety of marketing techniques to raise awareness of the airport in the community and to encourage good community-airport relations.
- In terms of raising local awareness of the airport, the three most effective tools listed were local advertising (listed by 10 airports), meetings with local business groups (mentioned by 7 airports), and local press coverage (mentioned by 6 airports).

## MARKET RESEARCH

---

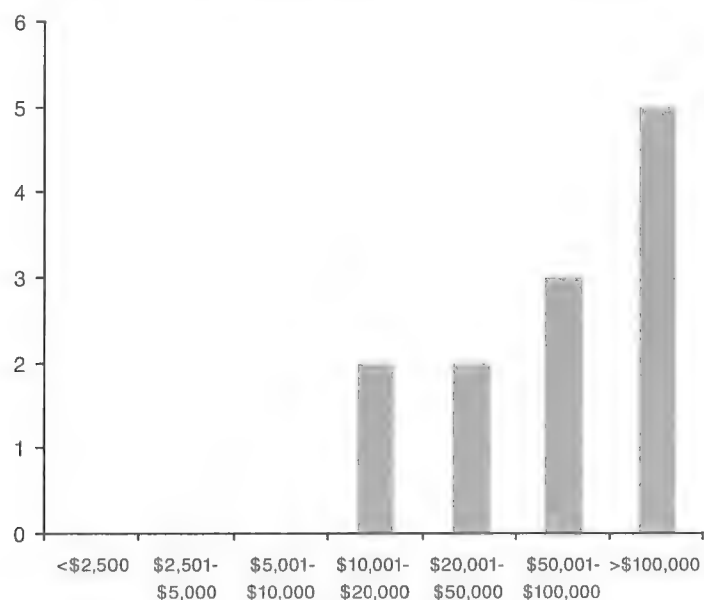
- Airports had different views regarding market research. Both large and small airports conducted customer satisfaction and travel destination surveys. Some airports said they regarded market research as useful, but did not have the budget for it. Still others said that they did not need to conduct market research because they knew the issues.
- Six airports reported conducting customer satisfaction surveys, five reported conducting informal opinion polls, and two reported conducting telephone surveys.

## FUNDING

---

- Each of the airports interviewed reported spending more than \$10,000 in the previous year on marketing, with five of the airports reporting spending over \$100,000. The three largest airports fell within the top spending category along with one very small airport and one medium sized airport (see Exhibit 18.10).



**Exhibit 18.10—Annual Spending on Marketing.**

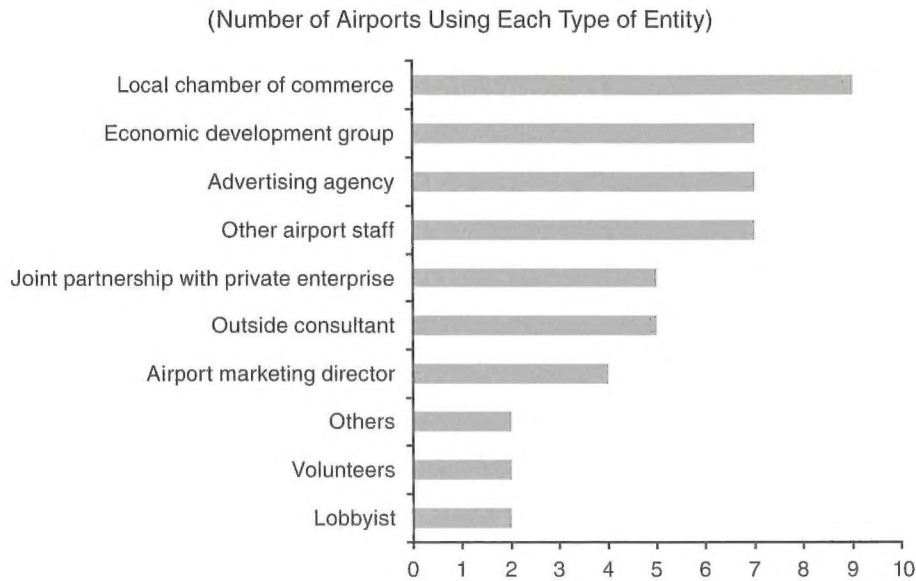
Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008

- All airports obtained some marketing funding from the airport operating budget. In addition, nine airports reported receiving grant funding—either from a Small Community Air Service Development Grant, a State grant, or other grant. Seven airports reported receiving in-kind contributions—perhaps the most unusual being the donation of locally made Vera Bradley handbags to be used in promotions.
- Several airports reported receiving special local government appropriations for marketing, individual donations, or matching funds from private businesses.
- As noted, this selection of airports may not be representative. The team suspects that the airports selected spend a greater than average amount on marketing. Three of the larger airports—Ft. Wayne, Huntsville, and Newport News—were included specifically because their marketing programs are known in the industry and, therefore, it is logical to assume that they have significant marketing budgets.

## STAFFING

- For most of the small airports interviewed, marketing is a function handled by the airport manager along with other responsibilities. Four airports had a dedicated full-time marketing person—the three largest airports, plus Huntington (which had over 60,000 enplanements in 2007). At Ft. Wayne, the primary air service marketing person is employed by the chamber of commerce, while the airport also employs a public relations person on staff.
- Among the smaller airports, only one reported having any marketing staff beyond the airport director. At Dubois, the airport employs a part-time marketing person.
- As shown in Exhibit 18.11, a majority of airports interviewed work closely with local chambers or economic development groups and made use of advertising agencies. Five airports reported using outside consultants to assist in their marketing activities.

**Exhibit 18.11—Other Entities That Assist with Airport Marketing.**



Source: Airport Manager Survey, 2008



*Abbreviations and acronyms used without definitions in TRB publications:*

AAAE	American Association of Airport Executives
AASHO	American Association of State Highway Officials
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACI-NA	Airports Council International-North America
ACRP	Airport Cooperative Research Program
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APTA	American Public Transportation Association
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASME	American Society of Mechanical Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATA	Air Transport Association
ATA	American Trucking Associations
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
CTBSSP	Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOE	Department of Energy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HMCRRP	Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASAO	National Association of State Aviation Officials
NCFRP	National Cooperative Freight Research Program
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
PHMSA	Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
RITA	Research and Innovative Technology Administration
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005)
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)
TRB	Transportation Research Board
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
U.S.DOT	United States Department of Transportation



500 Fifth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

RECEIVED

LA

## THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES™

*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

The nation turns to the National Academies—National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National Research Council—for independent, objective advice on issues that affect people's lives worldwide.

[www.national-academies.org](http://www.national-academies.org)

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Washington, DC  
Permit No. 8970